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DON'T TRIFLE WITH  
MONEY

BY

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## I.

ON the thirtieth of August, as Henry Walton sat alone in his office, he could see the dark moving silhouette of the *Lusitania* on its outward-bound way: flashes of red stacks against a blue sky, whose clearness was veiled by wreaths of smoke that curled upward, then a dimming of all lines, a gradual belittling of the gigantic gliding mass, a swallowing up in mist of the immense spectre.

Even after it had vanished, Walton gazed outward across irregular roof-tops and aerial telegraph poles, toward the diminishing trail of smoke. There was an expression of amazement in his eyes, as if he had come suddenly face to face with the realization of some decisive act; and his thoughts, as he tried to formulate them, also drifted outward, became vague, were engulfed in a region of mist, like the great ocean liner.

On that boat, he was saying to himself, travelled eastward the man who could—

But the fog descended, clouding his recollections, blurring the definite statements that concerned his own life and that of the east-bound traveller.

In this meditative solitude he passed, as we pass a frontier, from

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one land into another, and the milestone that marked the limits of the new domain bore an indication. In letters which, despite the fog, stood out distinctly, dancing about hard and cold and cruel, Walton could distinguish the terrible word "*Thief*."

Here and there they floated alone, these five little letters, suddenly assembling themselves into their right succession and pausing an instant with deadly distinctness before they began again their active whirl.

Henry Walton, in his busy life as a successful New York broker, was accustomed to agitation of all sorts, the most violent. But these small printed characters, in their mad race round the room, their sudden lining up, shook him, unsteadied him, left him inert.

Even as he looked at the clock in its leather case which stood before him on his table, the numbers shaped themselves into letters on its face, and the letters spelt out always the same "*Thief*."

With his head buried at last in his hands, his brow contracted, he presented so unwonted an aspect, that the office boy who had thrust the door open in a rush drew back and asked with something like pity:

"Don't you feel good, sir?"

Walton glanced up.

"What is it?" he asked, shaking himself into attention.

"Why, that lady's still here. She's been waiting about a couple of hours. She says her name's Mrs. Blair, and could n't you see her just for a moment?"

As the boy pronounced this name, Walton stealthily laid his hand against his coat-pocket. It seemed a precautionary measure against some invisible danger.

"Tell her," he said—"tell her that——"

But the lady had followed the boy, and she now crossed the threshold, letting the door swing back upon his retreating figure. She stood a moment in uncertainty before she spoke, and in her attitude there was something appealing, a slight embarrassment, as though she lingered in formulating a question upon which much might depend. She was, however, humble rather than timid, and as Walton met her eyes, with an ironical smile, she said hastily:

"You know why I have come? That's what you're going to say to me. It's an old story—I realize that better than any one! But you won't disappoint me again, you won't! This time you can't!"

She had shrunk into a chair by Walton's desk, where the light fell full upon her face, showing the lines of anxiety that grew deeper as she spoke, giving poignancy to her fairness. Her features, frail and exquisite, appeared for the moment more beautiful because of the suffering which threatened to destroy their loveliness.

Yet her supplication, quiet, ardent, intense, did not seem to touch Walton. He answered her gently:

"Yes, Margaret, I know why you have come."

"You are going to help me, aren't you?"

"I would do a great deal for you."

"Don't say that I am asking too much."

"No, not if you were asking it for yourself." As he said this, Walton looked up at her.

"But it is the same thing," she urged.

"Not quite," Walton responded. "Dudley Kendal came to grief through his own recklessness, not through any fault of mine. It is true that when he failed I was his principal creditor. I had believed in him, and I don't mean to suggest for an instant that there was anything off-color in what he did. Every severe break in the Market sees some lesser houses go under. But Kendal did not have that peculiar business instinct, that financial second-sight, which is as necessary to the knowledge of whom to trust and whom not to trust, in the transactions a stock-broker is called on daily to make, as it is useful for a man in a leaky boat to have some trifling notion about the art of swimming. Because Kendal, when he failed, was a victim of his own obtuseness, there is no reason why I should release him of his debts to me."

"Oh, reason!" Mrs. Blair repeated, with an arch expression which showed that she was still hopeful. "Reason is not everything!"

Walton shrugged his shoulders.

"My experience is that if you try to mix up business and sentiment, you make a mess of both. I don't say irrevocably that if Dudley Kendal were to get his start again in some other way I should not perhaps be tempted to go more easily on claiming the last cent of his indebtedness, but as things now stand, I have given you my final word."

Mrs. Blair, her slender hands clasped appealingly, cried out:

"But don't you see that, since you are his chief creditor, the very possibility of his getting his start again, as you call it, depends upon you, and upon you alone?"

Walton merely shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, it can't be!" Mrs. Blair pleaded. "You don't mean that you are going to refuse me this—that you are going to refuse him the clean slate that every man needs after a failure, in order to take up active life in the Street again!"

"Don't put it that way, Margaret; it makes me appear like a brute. There would be no end to this sort of thing if one man were expected to shoulder another's burdens to such an extent."

Mrs. Blair's hands dropped into her lap, and lay there a moment.

"Let me ask only one thing," she urged: "that you take time to think the case over. To be unfortunate, to be unsuccessful, is not an

unpardonable crime. If you will release Dudley from his debts, he has a future before him, and I with him. If you hold him to them, you will drive him to the wall." Her voice was full of compassion as she folded her arms across her breast, then held them toward Walton in a final appeal. "Please consider it!"

Walton's answer was deliberate:

"I can't do it, Margaret. I simply can't afford to."

As he spoke, a sudden change came over Mrs. Blair's face: her expression turned from supplication to hatred. Assuming full command of herself, she said deliberately:

"You will regret this. If I live to be an old woman or if I die to-morrow, I shall find my chance to avenge the man I love!"

Walton considered her thoughtfully a moment.

"Women are all alike," he said. "They can see no fault in the person they adore. I suppose it is the maternal feeling in them which is so surely roused by the weaker sort of man."

As he spoke, he set the papers before him in order, singled out the key he wanted, locked his desk, and then turned to Margaret Blair. Her eyes had wandered from him, and seemed to have fixed themselves with a narrowing of the lids upon some far horizon of despair.

"I am sorry, Margaret—it seems most ungracious—but I have a four-thirty train to catch."

With a graceful movement, Mrs. Blair swung out of her chair and toward the door. There over between the safe and the window Walton saw her stoop as if to pick up something. When she turned he was struck by the sudden change in her manner. She was smiling, and lightly she asked:

"Four-thirty train? Not for Rosedale, by any chance? I'm making that myself. How strange if we were to be guests under the same roof!" She was positively laughing now. "Not the Thurstons'? Is that where you are going? This is too amusing! And do you know"—she turned back, her hand on the door—"the beautiful Helena Boyd is to be at Mrs. Thurston's, too?"

He heard her laugh again as she went down the hall.

"The vengeance has begun, I suppose," Walton smiled to himself, and it occurred to him that it would be better if vengeance could take always a gracious form with women.

He lit a cigarette, and for a time watched the lighted end, which flashed a response to his deep inhalations, alternately glowing or turning to ashes. In a similar way, he reflected, Dudley Kendal's destiny waited on a breath from him to change from the gray of despair to the warmth of hope again, and with Kendal's destiny that of Margaret Blair. He had perhaps been too brusque, too relentless.

Walton had gotten up and was making a careful search about the



floor between the sofa and the window, where Mrs. Blair, as she went out, had stopped to pick up something.

"What in the world," he murmured, "could she have found here that seemed to make her so happy all of a sudden? Not just a plain pin! Perhaps, though. Women are superstitious creatures."

As he looked round, moving the chairs, trying the combination lock of the safe, he began again to see the dancing, whirling letters. They flew upward from the carpet, and in their pell-mell confusion they drew themselves into line, spelling out definitely the horrid word "*Thief*." He saw it against the blank panes of the window, he saw it on his handkerchief as he drew it out to wipe the moisture which had started to his brow, he saw it on the palms of his hands, he saw it on the buttons of the elevator-boy's coat as he left the office.

Had Margaret Blair seen it, too?

## II.

WALTON had heard of love at first sight, but this sort of love, like the other sort, left him sceptical. Where Cupid was concerned, the grain of salt with him preponderated, and he pictured the woman's heart strung up, transparent, on the dollar mark.

Partly by accident, partly from a reluctance to journey up the river with Mrs. Blair as travelling companion, Walton missed the four-thirty. It did not occur to him that Mrs. Thurston would send to meet the five-fifteen, but as he stepped out on the platform he heard some one call his name. There in a smart trap, quite alone, sat the prettiest girl he had ever seen. The wind held her in its searching embrace, driving her light muslin gown against the curves of her graceful figure. The scarlet ribbon that lay around her little, well-shaped head only half imprisoned the buoyant tendrils of gold. And this lovely creature, in a voice of sweetness indescribable, was calling to him!

He struggled toward her, his suit-case in one hand, his hat in the other.

"Do you mind putting it in behind?"—she nodded toward the valise. "Mrs. Thurston had people coming in every direction, and not a groom to spare."

"Thank God for that!" he murmured.

"So," she went on, sharing a bit of dust-robe as he clambered in, "as I adore driving this particular mare, I came to get you myself."

Walton still had his hat in his hand as he looked at her with growing admiration.

"I'm Helena Boyd," she said, as if his gaze might be explained by curiosity to know who she was. "You've probably never even heard of me."

"Yes!" he cried, eager to claim a bond.

She showed him her eyes a moment wide with amazement: two stars they appeared to him.

"From Mrs. Blair," he said. "She was in my office this afternoon, and she spoke of you."

"Oh, do you know her, too?" A sad note had rung out in this little question, and Miss Boyd, bringing the mare down to a walk, said, "I'm dreadfully sorry for Mrs. Blair. It must be awful to be just on the point of getting married and then have your fiancé fail in his business, and everything go back on you at once, credit to boot, with only unmerciful men dogging you for your debts."

Walton disliked the subject. Putting some humorous question to Miss Boyd, he changed her solemnity to mirth. As they drove up to the house, he groaned at the thought of sharing her with others.

Mrs. Thurston, a somewhat substantial mass of fluttering white garments, greeted Walton with the preoccupied Saturday-to-Monday manner of the hostess who makes a business of receiving. She gave orders in various directions to the liveried men-servants who stood about, and Walton was shaken rather abruptly from his rapturous contemplation of Miss Boyd when he heard her say:

"Take Mr. Walton's things to his room, and unpack them."

"Oh, thank you so much"—he darted forward—"but I believe I will ask you to have my things left just as they are."

With the gesture of one accustomed to everything, Mrs. Thurston waved to the valet not to wait.

When Walton found himself alone in his room a few minutes later, he bolted the door into the outer hall, drew the shades down, and in the golden obscurity made by the rays thus sheltered from the westward sinking sun, he drew his valise toward him. There, however, in the middle of the floor, his position seemed too unprotected. A turn of the closet's hinges brought a flash of light, and between deep walls, beshelved and hung with hooks, he opened at last his suit-case and took from it a small package of papers, which he turned over several times. The same ironical smile with which he had greeted Margaret Blair that afternoon in his office crossed his lips.

The position was grim, evidently grim. Why not take it, therefore, with a nice appreciation of its cynical side? Pleased at his own defiance of uneasiness, he handled the parcel affectionately. This affair had been hastily decided, but not, he flattered himself, with any of the carelessness brought about by nerves, and which usually causes such undertakings to fail. There in his hand he had securities for two hundred thousand dollars, confided to his keeping—stock for the surplus amount upon which a man going abroad might, or more likely might not, call during a short visit to Europe. William Thurston, who was

one of his best customers, and who did not owe him a cent, had left the certificates in Walton's keeping on the eve of his departure for England. Walton was about to play a delicate game. He remembered some man in the Street giving this definition to a similar enterprise: "If you succeed, you're a great financier; if you fail, you're simply a thief."

What Walton intended to do was this: take Thurston's securities with him to Chicago, and make a loan on them which would at last enable him to take that longed-for plunge into the market, whereby an "everlasting fortune" would be realized. He had certain "tips" which rendered speculating at this moment a "sure thing." Thurston would be absent several weeks, and long before his return Walton would have realized his profits, paid off his loan, and restored Thurston's securities to the strong box where they belonged, in his Wall Street office. Nobody would be a whit wiser or sadder, and Walton would have to the good a neat little pile.

At another moment it might perhaps have been reckless to attempt so deliberately fraudulent a proceeding, but Walton was sure of the market. Such an occasion might never again present itself in all his career, during which thus far, with a broker's characteristic thriftlessness, he had spent all of his generous earnings, setting nothing aside. One danger, to be sure, he must be prepared to face, not because of any trick which his proposed investments might play upon him, but from the fact that Thurston *might* call upon his reserve. This was possible at any moment, though Walton believed it highly improbable. Thurston had taken with him a letter of credit abundant for all the ordinary needs and luxuries of the restless American man abroad. On a former trip, under similar conditions, Walton remembered, the superfluous securities had lain idle in his office two whole months, and when Thurston had returned from that, his first trip abroad, his chief comment upon Europe was that he could "find nothing upon which to spend his money."

Under such circumstances, would it not be foolish to let these securities also lie idle for three weeks, their earning capacity turned to no one's account?

Walton scrutinized the stock as it lay in his hand. How strange a coincidence it was, his presence at Rosedale on that particular afternoon! To be sure, he had accepted this invitation of Mrs. Thurston's some weeks before; but, in a sentimental way, it was unsettling that at this very juncture he should thus find himself under the roof of Thurston, William Thurston, his trustful, absent host.

No doubt it was the close air of the lighted closet which had set all this jumble going in Walton's brain. He must get hold of himself, but first of all he must hide the certificates.

All sorts of conventional places suggested themselves to his fevered mind: under the mattress, between the bolster and the slip, up the chimney. Rot, all this. But where?

As he fumbled about the lining of his valise, to see if there were not a rip somewhere, he thought he heard a noise, a sound as if some one were turning a key stealthily in a lock. Bowed over the precious parcel, he listened. Then he examined the walls about him. A door at the back of the closet communicated with another room, but with the key from his own door he secured the lock. Then he listened again. Nothing broke the stifling stillness but his own quick, heavy breathing. Like a flash he lifted the inside cover of his valise and glided the papers in between the leather and the linen, smoothing them down and hiding with his clothes the slightly ruffled edge under which the stolen things had vanished.

A vision of the *Lusitania* flashed across his retina—Thurston's outward-bound boat—and with it came again the intervening letters, bobbing about like so many tipsy soldiers, lining themselves up into a mechanical kind of order—*Thief, Thief, Thief*. At the same moment Walton could hear Miss Boyd's plaintive note as she had alluded to Margaret Blair's unhappiness and to the meanness of her lover's creditors.

Ah, the game was not worth the candle! Honesty at any sacrifice was better than this nightmare of promised riches. The mere impulse which had led him into seeing the plausible side of such an act as this "borrowing" of Thurston's securities seemed now like some horrible poison circulating in his veins, and of which he longed to rid his system. He had not dared to meet the clear gaze of Helena Boyd's blue eyes as she lifted them to him. The decision to reflect came, impelling. Walton felt a great load lifted from his mind as he resolved upon his course of action. The papers were safe now. He would take them no further. As soon as he reached town, he would restore them to the place in his office where they belonged.

### III.

WHEN, half an hour later, in the hall below, Walton joined Mrs. Thurston, who was alone, his usual composure had been regained.

"I don't like a bit being a grass-widow," she whimpered. Her short, thick little figure with its spangled gown of black looked the picture of comfort.

"Thurston's not to be gone very long," Walton consoled.

"I know." She folded her stout little hands, covered with turquoises and diamonds (Walton wondered why it was that fat women always love turquoises), and pouted. "He'll be back in a month,

but I did n't want him to go at all. I had a sort of presentiment about it. The market's been playing such strange tricks lately."

Walton's eyes narrowed. He hastened to reassure her, covering his own discomfort with:

"But there's no such thing as real absence nowadays. Space has been annihilated by the wireless and all the other 'lesses."

"Any way," Mrs. Thurston cooed, settling the strap of jet which lay black and brilliant against her white arm, "it's a comfort to have you here, and I'm so glad to have you meet my friend Miss Boyd. She's a tremendously interesting girl."

"She's a tremendously good-looking girl," Walton threw in.

"That's all men think about!" Mrs. Thurston shook her blonde head reprovingly. "Helena Boyd has much more to boast of than mere beauty. She comes of an exceedingly good family, and, though she has had good reason to be spoilt by the world, she is as determined to do something with her life as her ancestors were before her. And two of them were governors!"

"I am sure," Walton smiled, "it would be most easy to submit to Miss Boyd's government."

"You're not serious," Mrs. Thurston pouted. "But really, you ought to get Helena to tell you some of her experiences."

The announcement of dinner brought in the rest of Mrs. Thurston's guests from the porch where they had been watching the sunset.

Walton was somewhat embarrassed to find himself directly opposite Mrs. Blair at table. He could not but wonder at the skill with which she concealed her inward feelings. On her frail visage there was not a trace of tears. That very day he had seen her agonized, supplicating, almost disfigured by hatred, yet now she sat opposite to him, calm, smiling, as if he had signed for her the release of the man she loved and whose debts to Walton so weighed him down that he could never, as it now remained, recover himself.

Walton thought of Cecil Rhodes's remark, "Half the world is governed by their sentiments, the other half by their interests." This was true of men, he knew, but women, plague take them! seemed to have some magic way of mingling their love and their needs, driving them single, as a pair, or even tandem, as the case might demand.

He wondered how Miss Boyd drove hers.

She seemed to have neither a cause to defend nor a heart to lose. She was ethereal and illusive, and Walton found her even more attractive than when he had seen her first at the station. She had replaced the scarlet ribbon for one of blue so pale that its shining surface seemed to reflect the gold in her lovely hair. She was lithe as a willow, and while there was something demure in the perfect repose with which she sat at table, she suggested graceful activity.



Now, as he compared them, it seemed to him that Margaret Blair looked old and scarred beside Miss Boyd. If they cared to keep their looks, women made an awful mistake to go in for heavy tragedy. He was formulating these bromidic prescriptions when Mrs. Thurston's fat little voice rang out in a tone of incredulous astonishment:

"Margaret Blair! It's the strangest coincidence I have ever heard of in my life!"

With the popular love of the unexpected and inexplicable, particularly in the coincidence form, Mrs. Thurston's guests leaned forward expectantly.

Mrs. Blair had grown a shade paler, but she was exceedingly calm. Her hostess fluttered on:

"It's the queerest thing I've ever imagined. I thought I was the only woman in the world with a ring like that!" She pointed to an elaborate design in diamonds which covered the little finger of Mrs. Blair's right hand, and went on excitedly, "My husband had that ring made for me when we were in Paris."

"Not this one, I think," put in Mrs. Blair gently.

"Well, of course, you can't trust jewellers, I suppose, not to repeat things they've made for you, and you alone. But this was Will's own design."

"Have you your ring on?" Mrs. Blair asked, somewhat maliciously. "It would be amusing to see them together."

"I can't show you mine to-night, but I thought you'd seen it often." Mrs. Thurston looked at her fat fingers. "I'm wearing my turquoise to comfort me while my Cartier ring is being cleaned. Will took it up with him to leave at Tiffany's."

Mrs. Blair had slipped the glittering jewel from her slender hand, and it was passed along the table. Every one commented on its beauty and oddness, and when it at last reached the hostess's eager grasp, she gave a little grunt of satisfaction.

"It's the exact replica of mine." She turned it back and forth, put it on. "It must be miles too big for you," she ventured. "Look."

It was obvious as she held up the little digit that the ring fitted her to perfection. Taking it off and starting it on its backward way to Margaret Blair, she could not resist the feminine explosion of curiosity.

"Oh, Margaret," she said, "excuse me, but *would* you mind telling me where you got that ring?"

Mrs. Blair had grown quite pale. She lifted her eyes to the man opposite her, fixed them on Walton a moment, and then, turning to Mrs. Thurston, she said:

"It was given to me by a friend, if you must know."

The directness of the rebuff made more embarrassing the pause which followed.

Walton believed his own heart had stopped beating, but his hand, he saw, was steady as he lifted his glass to his lips and took a long draught, looking down while he drank, into the clear water, where again he saw dancing the letters: *Th..f.*

After a time that seemed interminable, Mrs. Thurston recovered herself, and with an hysterical laugh she said:

"My dear, you must excuse me for being so horribly indiscreet!"

The conversation again presently resumed its strain of commonplaces regarding the strangeness of coincidence.

As the party regained the hall and stood in little groups, Mrs. Thurston whimpered to Walton:

"I do hate having Will away. It gives me such horrid presentiments."

Walton looked forward to the evening as offering the dreariness of a long wait in a railroad station, and he ground his teeth as he lived over the awkwardness with which he must have handled Thurston's papers in order, as he lifted them from the safe, to have let fall the ring unperceived on the office floor. Why had he not followed what was his first impulse when Thurston spoke of leaving the ring with him: put it in his pocket to carry up to Rosedale? Then none of these odious complications could have arisen. He recalled how Margaret Blair's manner had changed suddenly as she went out of his office. As a bird snaps up its prey, she had snapped up the jewel. Was it for the value of it, the intrinsic value? This he could not believe. Yet his doubt as to her motive in taking it left him powerless. To denounce her openly, to declare before them all, as it was his temptation to do, that she had taken the ring from his keeping, seemed to him, in his own tormented state of mind, a dastardly act. Even in self-defense, he could not bring himself to accuse a woman.

Miss Boyd interrupted his desperate meditations.

"How fierce you look!" she said. "I suppose the true business man has to look fierce most of the time, though, does n't he?"

She had seated herself beside him near the window at the end of the room, whither he had withdrawn, and now, gathering her white muslin skirts about her and smoothing out her blue sash, she said very archly:

"Perhaps it was n't business, after all. Perhaps it was the one other absorbing alternative."

"What is that?" Walton asked.

"Why, love, of course."

"Do I look like a sentimentalist?" Walton shrugged his shoulders.

"Looks are not everything," she answered. Her eyes showed a clear circle of blue, fresh as the sky after rain. Instinctively, as if she too felt some of the sympathy which she had awakened in him,

Helena Boyd's conversation had taken a personal tone. "Sometimes," she was saying, "even our most intimate friends leave us quite indifferent. And then again the merest stranger, whom we meet simply in passing, seems to rouse in us a certain desire to"—she paused a moment—"I was going to say, to control their sentiments."

"Mrs. Thurston told me," Walton responded, "that your grandfather and his father before him had been rulers in this free land of ours. That may perhaps account for the temptation you feel to control others."

"Did Mrs. Thurston say that I was horribly tyrannical?" Miss Boyd put the question eagerly.

"Not in the least," was Walton's answer. "She said you were that rarest of all products: a society girl who is making something of her life."

"Oh, I'm afraid that is n't true, either," Miss Boyd protested. "But all I meant just now about influencing other people's feelings was that when I interrupted you, and you looked so serious, I should rather have had you thinking about some business combination than about some—" Walton watched a little flush creep into her face as she lowered her eyes before finishing: "Well, some sentimental memory."

These words rang in Walton's ears during the long vigils of the night. At last, toward three, he fell into a profound sleep.

#### IV.

WHEN Walton awakened, the sun was streaming into his room at a very nine-o'clock angle, and it seemed to him that he would be too late for any sort of breakfast.

Having this bit of holiday might have been so delicious! The office knew his telephone number, but he had given them especial instructions not to call up unless it was a matter of life or death.

A long morning on the golf-links with Miss Boyd kept Walton's thoughts off the unpleasant incident of the night before, and its probable, still more unpleasant results. Nothing, he felt as he gazed at the pretty Miss Boyd, could have taken his mind so successfully from the turmoil into which he saw no way of bringing order.

"Do you know," Miss Boyd said as they swung along homeward across the links, "I have a sort of feeling that something has happened."

Walton was glad of any excuse to keep his eyes fixed on her.

"I don't know what it may be," she hastened to add, "but just something exciting. Haven't you ever noticed that when one queer thing happens in a house where you're staying, there are always at least three more to follow?"

"The greatest excitement for me," he answered, "has been this walk by your side. I wish it could go on forever."

As if in response to her young guest's prophecy, Mrs. Thurston was indeed in a state of great agitation when they reached home. Excusing herself to Miss Boyd, she drew Walton into the little morning-room off the hall.

"It's always this way," she said. "As soon as Will leaves home, I get into trouble at once. One of the maids has been arrested without the slightest warning. And I had perfectly splendid references. People are so horribly unconscientious. Imagine giving a recommendation to a girl who is an outright thief!"

Jarred by this brusque denunciation, Walton put a few questions:

"Has the girl stolen things at Rosedale?"

"Oh, no, no!" Mrs. Thurston exclaimed. "She was under suspicion, it seems, when I took her. The police were on her track, and *this* was where it led. Charming for me! Did you ever *hear* of anything so annoying?"

She was on the verge of tears, but the announcement of lunch shook her back into her conventional good humor. She wished the subject barred out from general conversation, she whispered to Walton; there was no use in alarming her visitors.

Not hostile to the idea of food after his long morning in the open air, and with something like the cynical relish of the condemned man for his last meal, Walton was enjoying to the full a bit of tenderloin steak, cooked to a turn, when the butler announced:

"A call for Mr. Walton on the telephone."

Tossing his napkin into his chair and with a nod to his hostess, he went to take the message.

It was Judson's voice, saying, "Shall we expect you down at the office this afternoon?"

"At the office?" Walton echoed, and the worst summons which had come to him from mortal experience sounded out from the little receiver he held pressed against his ear.

"What?" he murmured under his breath. "Say that again."

And Judson's whining voice reiterated:

"We've received a second wireless this morning from Mr. Thurston, instructing us to deposit the securities at the Sixth National Bank before noon on Monday. We've been searching the office. The papers are n't in the safe. What time will you be down?"

The answer went back in a low tone.

With appetite somewhat arrested, Walton returned to the table.

"Just a call from Judson, my partner," he said in an offhand manner; "nothing very important, but I am afraid, Mrs. Thurston, that I shall have to take the first train I can back to town."

"I thought you were bound for Chicago," Margaret Blair remarked, and Mrs. Thurston shrugged her stout little shoulders, whimpering:

"How annoying! Do you really think you must go? The Potters and the Marshalls are coming over this afternoon, and I have promised you for a second table at bridge. You're a perfect fraud, Mr. Walton. We counted on you for over Sunday, at least. Do wait until to-morrow."

"Yes, do!" It was Miss Boyd who threw in this additional entreaty. "You know to-morrow is Saturday, a half-holiday, and Monday is Labor Day, so you can't pretext business."

"Monday is Labor Day?" Walton echoed faintly.

"You seem to take the news very hard." Mrs. Thurston laughed.

"Labor Day for most of us means a day of labor, and I assure you"—he was looking with much feeling at the pretty Miss Boyd—"I should much prefer stopping here to play. But I must be a stoic."

"At least"—it was Margaret Blair who spoke very deliberately, and Walton thought he detected a note of malice in her voice—"at least, you can have one rubber of bridge with us while your things are being packed."

"Delighted!" He was pleased with his own presence of mind as he listened to the firm sound of his voice. "I'll just run up a moment and get my cigarette-case, if you'll let me, Mrs. Thurston."

Walton was thinking with electric rapidity.

The securities were somewhat bulky, but he could place them in either of his breast-pockets, and, by leaving his coat open, not look unduly clumsy.

Up the stairs, three steps at a time, one final bound brought him to the closet door, which he threw open, sinking down on his knees by the precious suit-case, lifting the clothes from within, pushing the cover aside, diving his hand in between linen and leather.

But he dived it in again and again, drawing it out each time empty. He plunged it so far in that it came out with the back scratched scarlet; but always empty.

The certificates were not there!

They had been taken from Walton's suit-case. He had been robbed, robbed of his own plunder!

From below he could hear Thurston's wife's voice calling to him:

"Come, Mr. Walton, we're waiting for you to deal!"

## V.

WHEN Walton reached New York it was only four o'clock, a hot, August, parching four-o'clock. Instinctively he turned toward the down-town subway entrance. By flinging himself into the speeding underground he could yet reach the office before Judson had set out



for his suburban home. Judson, in fact, was waiting for him, he knew. Judson would question him at once concerning the "mislaid certificates." No doubt he could put up a bluff about "secret letters" or a "rush of business" which could account for his saying nothing about the securities Thurston had left with him on the day of his departure, merely placing the whole packet momentarily beyond reach. But after this preliminary explanation further questions would follow, and Walton did not feel up to continued duplicity. He had been foiled and dumfounded in his first attempt at treachery. There was scarcely a hair's-breadth chance for him to escape. Any further conversation on the subject could only make matters a thousand times worse. He would keep away from the office.

This decision formulated itself firmly in his mind as he crossed Forty-Second Street and went into the Belmont Hotel café. At four on an August afternoon the place was fairly empty. He ran no risk of being seen. The customers were chiefly ladies from the suburbs, who dropped in to have a cup of tea, or an ice, before taking the train.

At a neighboring table, however, Walton caught sight of a young couple, evidently lovers, like himself avoiding the public eye, though for reasons very different. Their heads were bowed quite close together as they leaned toward each other across the table, on which was spread an untouched feast of *café parfait* and *éclair*s. The girl's pretty blonde hair, which showed beneath her close-fitting cap of black tulle, made him think irresistibly of another blonde head, which he had left so short a time before nodding good-by to him from the veranda at Rosedale.

What a mystery Helena Boyd was to him!

She seemed at one and the same time so intense and so restless. Walton would have supposed that she had found her object in life, and yet she had spoken to him in the most ardent manner of her longing "really to do something."

Certainly she was unconventional enough: her driving over to the station without knowing him had been only one example among many that had slightly surprised him during his short twenty-four hours' visit under the same roof with Miss Boyd. And yet—for he admitted to himself that he was somewhat old-fashioned—he had observed to his satisfaction that his new friend was not a Bohemian. She had not smoked a cigarette after dinner, as Mrs. Thurston always did, and she never played bridge, so his hostess had told him.

No, Walton reflected, Helena Boyd was an unconventional unconventionality. It was more the assurance of the perfectly well-bred person who feels safe to trust her impulses. She had roused his curiosity without shocking him in the least, and she was adorably pretty.

Who was she, and why had he never heard of her before? He felt at the same time a distrust and a confidence in her. She seemed capable of anything; as some one had said, "even of good."

In an endeavor to bring Walton back to the grim fact that it is not customary to occupy a place at a café table without "ordering," the waiter placed a menu before him.

Walton "ordered," and as he smoked and sipped, his mind wandered from Helena Boyd to his present predicament.

What was he to do? What, in Heaven's name?

The slightest move he made to recover his lost certificates would be self-denunciation. This paralyzed him in all effort toward detection of the thief who had taken the papers from the valise at Mrs. Thurston's. If Walton had never prayed before, he came very near it now. He contemplated everything: confessing to a lawyer, who would keep his professional secret; consulting a mind-reader to discover the robber; the "treating" of his "case" by Christian Science. With melancholy, he concluded that there was no honest way out of dishonesty.

Yet—and it was natural the question should put itself with tormenting assiduity to his mind—was it *really* dishonest, what he had done? Did not the certainty he felt of his success in speculating exonerate him? He believed so. Thousands of other brokers must have done—in fact, did do every day—the very same thing which put him now in the position of a—— He could no longer formulate the little five-lettered word.

Evidently it was a delicate line to be drawn by conscience, that between right and wrong. Just wherein did wrong for him consist?

In the intention that had prompted his act?

In its being found out and discussed?

Brokers, financiers, too often, he concluded, entrusted their virtue to the chance of secrecy.

But what was he to do?

The hot, dusty air blew in from the street, the insistent clang of the electric cars as they crowded by, groaning on their rails, reached him, adding to the dismal impression of New York on this sultry August afternoon. The city, he believed, must be given up to those whose souls, like his own, were in torment. Surely no one in peace of mind would remain willingly in summer New York.

As his mind ran over the possibilities open to him, the thought of forgery flashed an instant across his brain. It might be possible to substitute other certificates for those which had been stolen.

As this idea occurred to him, Walton brusquely knocked the ashes from the cigar which had long since been left to die out. He shook a match loose from the case before him, got another light, and, gnawing the weed's end, he reflected.

No. No. It could never be done. Admitted that he might procure from the clerk or the secretary of the company a number of certificates, he would then have to forge the signatures of two officers, and that of the registrar of transfers as well.

Why dally with impossible things? Why concentrate on idle sentiment, on bitter, agonizing regret?

Action, action alone, could save him.

He called to the waiter and asked for a pen and paper. Hastily he wrote a short note to Margaret Blair, telling her it was urgent that they should meet within the next twenty-four hours. He made his letter insistent, imperative.

He smiled in spite of himself as he recalled the cool, outrageous impudence with which Margaret Blair had gazed at him as she answered her inquisitive hostess when Mrs. Thurston had questioned her about the ring. This taking of the jewel was, no doubt, her first move toward vengeance. The second had not been slow to follow.

"By Jove!" he thought. "A woman's mind works swiftly when she's on vindication bent!"

There was not a detective in the force, he concluded, clever enough to have found out on so slight a clue—with no clue, in fact—that the wretched papers were in his hands.

Dusk was beginning to cast its gray shadows upon the outside world.

Walton settled with the waiter, left the café, strolled up to his apartment in East Fifty-Fifth Street, and enlisted the services of the janitor to help him to dress for dinner. His own servant he had given a fortnight's holiday, not expecting so soon to return.

## VI.

TOWARD eight o'clock Walton took his place at a table in the window of Delmonico's. He ordered a good dinner, a bottle of good wine. The "well-fed" point of view was often salutary, he had found. No light, however, broke on his bewildered mind as he ate his way through cold consommé, sole Colbert, pigeon *en compôte*. Reaching at last the dessert, he turned his helpless gaze from the hot, dingy avenue with its meagre stream of vehicles, to the brilliantly lighted restaurant, humming to the sound of electric fans.

There, over by the window in the corner, sat Judson. As he caught sight of Walton, he got up and with one stride was across the room.

"Hello, old man!" he said. "I began to think something had happened to you—tunnel accident or something of that sort."

"How dreadfully old-fashioned!" Walton replied, affecting sang-froid.

"Well, you can't be here by chance?" Judson queried.

"I'm here to eat my dinner," was the somewhat surly response.

"Did n't you get my telephone message at the Thurstons'? But of course you did."

"You're wandering in your mind, Judson."

"I telephoned you twice."

"Twice?"

"Yes," Judson said. "A third wireless came from Thurston this afternoon."

Walton interrupted, affecting good-humor:

"Look here, old man, it strikes me you're a trifle over-zealous. Monday is Labor Day. There's a long sweep from Friday to Tuesday on the Wall Street calendar. One would positively think, to look at you, that you were uneasy about Thurston's securities. Might I, in polite language, suggest that, without exaggerated modesty, you retain your nearest undergarment? In other words——"

Judson, squelched, attempted a few remarks about the heat, and went back to his dinner, ruminating.

Having finished his dessert, Walton lighted a cigar and walked out toward Fifth Avenue. Hailing a taxi-cab, he got into it and, without giving any address, nodded in the direction of Washington Square. The chauffeur, understanding that his "fare" wished merely to reflect while taking the air, drove at a deliberate rate down the avenue. Having reached Eighth Street, he crossed over, and, following the car-tracks, turned into Sixth Avenue. The din of the elevated, roaring overhead, had a soothing effect on Walton's tired nerves. He was in a mood to think of anything but himself, or preferably not to think at all.

Presently he was jerked forward by the sudden stopping of the vehicle. The taxi-cab had come to a standstill.

A considerable crowd gathered about the door of a dusky building caught his wandering attention. He looked more sharply, and, seeing that he had unwittingly arrived before Jefferson Market Court, he signalled his chauffeur to wait.

Courts, prisons, and their proceedings had a strange alluring attraction for Walton at the present moment.

He descended, and, pushing his way through the agglomeration of individuals stationed before the court door, he entered.

A woman had been arrested—arrested for stealing. This much he gathered from the throng of curious idlers. Simulating an official interest in the culprit, Walton obtained entrance to the court-room. For a moment he sat on one of the long benches, gazing through the iron grille which separated the spectators from the judge, the court officers, and the prisoner. The thought struck him that this screen stood as a boundary between those who were simply good in this world

and those who had yielded to temptation. Was not his own place, he asked himself, on the court side of this iron grille? Did he not by right belong among the guilty? A shiver ran across his shoulders. It was gruesome enough to feel remorse, but how much more dreadful to be accused, judged, condemned!

In vain he looked for a woman in the group before him.

Signalling at last to the young attaché whose vigilance keeps peace and order among the spectators, Walton made inquiries.

"Where is the woman who has been arrested for stealing?" he whispered.

The young attaché, nodding toward the vestibule, responded:

"Why, you might find her there."

This postponement had served to whet Walton's curiosity, and as he entered the outer hall his mind was quite made up to one thing: be she what she might, this woman, he would bail her out that very night. The thought that a girl, tempted beyond her powers of resistance, should yield, and then be punished for her weakness, had become unendurable to him.

With a determination which was manifest in his entire attitude, Walton stepped up to the bailiff and declared his intention. The bailiff referred him to the other officials, and in a moment Walton was confiding to them his decision.

"I wish," he said, "to give bail for this woman who has been arrested for stealing."

His statement did not produce the sensation he had anticipated. Evidently the court officials were stupefied by bad air and wire-pulling. For some moments he waited while the leaves of a register rustled under authoritative fingers, then a voice said:

"Marion Hemsley, aged twenty-five years, arrested while in the service of Mrs. Thurston at Rosedale, New York, for stealing while in the service of her former employer."

"Arrested at Mrs. Thurston's!" Walton cried. "What an extraordinary coincidence!"

"She's not the one?" the clerk queried, looking wearily over his spectacles.

"The very one," Walton answered, and to himself he murmured, "Great heavens, how small the world is! That very girl I saw this morning at Rosedale."

There was another premonitory rustling of register pages, and again the voice spoke:

"Marion Hemsley, the servant girl arrested at Mrs. Thurston's, has already been released on bail."

"Already been released?" cried Walton. "May I know by whom?"

A moment's consultation ensued, then a heavy hand pushed toward



Walton the record. With some difficulty he made out the signature affixed to the pledge of the three hundred dollars' bail.

"Boyd," he murmured. "Helena Boyd. Well, I——"

His exclamation was interrupted. Laughing gaily, Miss Helena Boyd came out of one of the cells. She was followed by Marion Hemsley.

Walton took off his hat.

"Good evening, Miss Boyd," he smiled. "I hardly expected to find you in such a place."

"I am perhaps more human than you thought," she returned, glancing toward the poor creature beside her, whose eyes were downcast.

"Can't I be of any use to you?" Walton's tone was eager.

"I don't believe so," Miss Boyd responded.

"I've a taxi-cab here. It's not easy to find one in this quarter. Let me drive you wherever you are going. It's late, you know."

Miss Boyd hesitated. Walton watched the exquisite curves of her mouth as "yes" and "no" struggled for expression on its crimson surface.

"Come, I have decided for you," he said, leading the way, and when he had placed Miss Boyd on the back seat and Marion Hemsley opposite her, he asked:

"What address?"

"Home." Miss Boyd smiled.

"You forget," Walton returned.

"Oh, of course, you don't know where I live: 37 West Eighty-Ninth. How stupid of me!"

The long drive uptown was awkward. There were a thousand things Walton wanted to say to the mysterious and charming person by his side, but the presence of her protégée, whose scarlet cheeks attested to her shame and gratitude, made it impossible to speak on any but conventional subjects.

He was surprised, however, somewhat embarrassed even, by his own ignorance regarding Miss Boyd. He had spent only twenty-four hours with her, to be sure, under Mrs. Thurston's hospitable roof, but in that time a peculiar sympathy seemed to have sprung up between them, an understanding which gave him the feeling of being an old friend. Yet, except for what Mrs. Thurston had told him, he was ignorant of the slightest practical detail concerning Miss Boyd's existence.

When they reached their destination she turned to him gracefully:

"You'll come in, won't you?"

"It's not too late?"

The door was opened by a man-servant. Leading the way, Miss Boyd said sweetly to Walton:

"I want to give an order. It will take me only a moment. Then I'll join you in the library."

Walton waited.

The library was a delightful room. There was an agreeable mixture of the classic and the personal in the stately mahogany bookshelves, the deep armchairs, the corner table with its collection of photographs in odd frames, the comfortable lamp, whose generous rays embraced in their light an Indian basket overflowing with fancy-work. It was so evidently a woman's room, this library where Miss Boyd had asked Walton to wait. He could not bear the thought that perhaps she shared it with some other person. He wanted it to be hers alone, entirely hers, this sanctum into which, because of her trust in him, she had let him penetrate.

The soft sound of her approach presently reached him. She appeared at the door. In her white muslin gown, her flower-laden hat, she seemed so fresh, so cool, Walton found her adorable.

"Was it very long?" she asked. "A true, woman's minute?"

"It seemed long without you," Walton answered, a touch of gallantry in his musical voice. "And yet I did n't mind waiting. I like to be here among your books, your pictures."

"You're too kind," she laughed, dropping into a low chair beside him.

"They are yours, are n't they?" he asked intently.

"What, these?" She lifted her hand with a little waving gesture, which left her arm bare to the elbow. What a graceful, slender, perfect arm it was!

"You really do live here alone, do you?" Walton pursued.

The incredulity of his tone provoked Miss Boyd to mirth.

"Of course I do," she cried. "Entirely alone. I've been an orphan ever since I was ten. My guardian died six years ago, so, you see, there is no one with whom I could very well live."

"Of course not. I understand. How fortunate—I mean, how very sad! And so you spend your time just going about making people happy and doing good. You've got a lot of pluck."

"I confess"—Miss Boyd smiled—"that this is the first time I have ever bailed out a thief from prison."

"It's splendid," Walton affirmed. "It's tremendously noble and unselfish. Only, to be perfectly frank, do you think it's quite safe?"

"What?" asked Miss Boyd. "You don't think we're going to jump the bail?"

"Oh, no, not that. But it does n't seem to me prudent, living alone here as you do, to take under your roof this girl. To say the least, she is rather a suspicious character."

"I like suspicious characters," Miss Boyd answered. "They are the only kind that interest me."

She tilted back the low seat where she had placed herself. Her exquisite figure, in its light gown, was outlined with amazing beauty against the sombre wood of the chair. She had thrown her arms gracefully above her head. For a moment she contemplated Walton with an expression of mirthfulness and coquetry, and a little air of provocation which troubled him. Then she said:

"I'm not a bit conventional, you know. It would frighten me to death, for example, to make a fourth at bridge with three good players; but to shelter a thief—— Don't worry, my reasons are good. I know what I'm doing."

Walton was not to be discouraged. The expression in Miss Boyd's eyes held him in its magnetic current. He could not desist; he wanted to know more, to hear more, to talk on indefinitely with this frail little beauty who was so fearless and at the same time so timid. Impulsively, seeing how weary she looked, he put into words a sudden longing:

"Let's go and have supper somewhere together. We certainly deserve it."

The very sound of his voice making such a proposition at such an hour—the clock had struck eleven—startled him. What would she say? He waited for her clamor of feminine opposition. But no. Not at all. Very deliberately Miss Boyd responded:

"Supper? How awfully nice! It's just what I need. I was so busy following up this affair at the police station first and then at the court that I didn't have time for dinner. Where shall we go?"

Walton knew an uptown place where the music was good, and where they could dine on the roof in comparative peace. There was a foreign air, too, to this aerial café where Walton took Miss Boyd for supper.

## VII.

"It seems," Helena said, looking about them when they had arrived, "as if we were starting on a journey together into some unknown country."

"The land of Bohemia," Walton replied. "Very much looked down upon by the smart people of New York."

"I'm so glad I'm not smart," she said. "Fashion is like a coat of mail which protects you to such an extent that you end by feeling nothing at all."

"Most people don't want to feel nowadays," Walton rejoined. "Hearts are very old style. I'm sure that even in Cupid's world the antiquity dealer must look upon a heart as a rare old curio."

The waiter leaned forward, thrusting toward Walton the bill of fare, as much as to affirm that hearts indeed were not the only things.

Walton consulted his new friend.

Did she like lobster? Broiled? Would she have some scrambled eggs to begin with? *Oeufs brouillés à la tomate*? Champagne? Not too dry? Then, after, a nice cheese to top off with?

Walton sighed an astonished sigh as she nodded her assent to each of his suggestions.

"What?" she asked. She had spread out her napkin, and now she lifted with both hands her veil and pushed back her hair as a woman does when she has had her hat on since morning. "What?" she repeated. "Why do you say 'oh' as though you were surprised?"

"I was going to make a selfish remark," Walton answered. "I can't help feeling astonished. Since I have had the pleasure of being old enough to order a supper—I won't say how many years that is—this is the first time I have found a woman friend willing to eat what I proposed. They generally take the bill of fare in their own hands, ordering what they like—for both."

Miss Boyd laughed with a touch of coquetry.

"Perhaps I'm so hungry, I would eat anything."

"Even what a man suggests? I see."

"It looks awfully good, any way," she added, lifting on her fork the first mouthful. Then for a moment they both ate in silence. A light breeze had sprung up, cooling with delicious gusts the parched air of the August night. They sat by the balustrade of the roof garden, on one side the glaring lights of the roof café, on the other the soft black stretch of sky, which seemed to have flung out its starry mantle at this very spot so that it might serve for background to Miss Boyd's delicate profile as she took supper with Walton in this uptown New York café.

"There"—she gave a little sigh as she laid down her fork on the empty plate, and sipped the sparkling wine—"I'm like a child who's been fed. I feel better now."

"You've had a long day of it," Walton responded sympathetically.

"And a long night, too."

Walton watched her closely as she made this remark. Once or twice a shadow of a suspicion had crept across his mind—the merest shadow.

He could not believe that Miss Boyd was capable of complicity with Marion Hemsley, the dishonest servant girl, and yet he found it hard to justify, on merely philanthropic grounds, her impulse in giving bail for this commonplace thief. To be sure, though, he reflected, his own intention had been identical. Then, with a desire to be very honest, he began:

"You know, if you had n't bailed that girl out, I was going to."

"You? But what reason had you?" she asked, leaning eagerly forward under the candelabra's light, so that Walton could see the transparent fairness of her lovely brow.

"Why, I—I—why, I don't know. I was lonely, I suppose. You're more easily touched by others when you're sorry for yourself. New York is such an empty place in August."

Miss Boyd laughed. Her teeth showed a flash of pearls in their case of crimson velvet.

"Would you," she asked, "give bail for all prisoners indiscriminately at this season, just because New York is so dull in August?"

"Yes," Walton nodded emphatically; "and I'd get them all released in January, because it's so gay. Prison must be ghastly, don't you think so?"

"Any place must be ghastly where you're sure to take with you a guilty conscience."

She paused a moment. Walton scrutinized her. There was something appealing in his glance. Then she continued, not looking at him:

"I'm convinced this girl, Marion Hemsley, is guilty."

"How can you be sure?"

She did not reply at once. Walton waited some time for an answer. At last it came.

"Did you miss nothing?" Miss Boyd asked very deliberately.

"No—yes—or, rather, no," he stammered. "The truth is, I slept so soundly that all my belongings could have been taken one by one without my perceiving it. Men never keep strict track of their things. I had very little with me at the Thurstons'. Only the most limited amount a bachelor could allow himself for a two days' visit." Then, very slowly, he added, "And so you suspect this poor girl of really being a thief?"

"The way I argued was simply this: It might help her in the long run if I bailed her out. It could n't possibly do her any harm, and to have her under my own roof was the easiest way of keeping an eye on her. I shall find out now whether she has in her possession the diamond bracelet I believe she stole from me."

"You think she stole from you too?"

"Yes," Miss Boyd nodded.

"How did you discover your loss?" Walton asked eagerly. "So much has happened in such a short time."

"The bracelet was one I wear very often. I missed it at once. Moreover," Miss Boyd continued, "my suspicions had been aroused in a curious way. There was a storm during the night at Rosedale. The wind came up very suddenly toward four o'clock. One of the



shutters downstairs shook loose from its hook, and the noise of the banging woke me."

"I heard nothing," Walton murmured.

"I got up, put on my dressing-gown, went down to the landing, and made fast the swaying blind. As I came up the stairs again, I passed in the hall on your floor first one female figure and then another. I had no light except a little electric battery lamp, and it was impossible to see either woman's face. I could distinguish their outlines only as they hurried up the stairway in front of me; disappearing into the darkness on the floor above, one somewhat behind the other, so that they did not see each other, I think, and neither saw me."

"Two women," Walton repeated. "What two women were there in the house besides Mrs. Thurston and Mrs. Blair?"

"Mrs. Thurston sleeps on the ground floor, so it could not have been she. I listened for a long time—in fact, until long after daylight. No one stirred again to go downstairs."

"Then it must have been——" Walton's tone was so emphatic that Miss Boyd checked him, laughing.

"How intense you are!" she cried.

"I confess you've quite made my blood creep," he answered. "Surely your female figures were n't ghosts?" He was trying to speak lightly.

"You don't believe in ghosts, do you?" Miss Boyd pursed her mouth up into a rosy circle.

"No," he answered; "I don't believe in ghosts at all. But this is most extraordinary—more so than you can imagine." Then with an accent sincere, almost tender, he added, "If I were superstitious, I should not wonder so much that some accident had brought together these two women in the hall last night at Rosedale—that was a mere passing incident, an accident. What seems quite out of the ordinary, is that you and I should have been thus brought together again to-night."

"It was a remarkable coincidence."

"How I wish I'd known you before!" Walton said. "I feel as if all my life had been wasted until now."

She smiled, pleased evidently with what Walton was saying.

"Yes," he went on very earnestly; "you're the sort of girl who changes a man's whole point of view about women—about life. There are some things I've done which I will never do again now, just because I have, even for so short a time, known you."

"I warned you that I was not conventional, you remember," Miss Boyd responded, becoming more serious than she had been at any time before. "With conventional people, you always know just where you stand. With a person like me"—she threw out her little hands and raised her shoulders in a graceful shrug—"you are either lifted high up into the clouds or else dropped down into the dregs."

"I'm not afraid of being dropped into the dregs," Walton affirmed. "I'll take my chances of that."

"But you know nothing about me," she protested, shaking her pretty head.

"I'm sure I should like to know more," said Walton. "I should like to know all, everything."

"I might be a dreadful disappointment to you." Miss Boyd's tone was sad as she made this remark, but before Walton could answer she continued: "In the first place, aren't you astonished at what I have done this evening? Here I am taking supper alone with you, and I scarcely know you at all. When we part in a moment, I shall go home to the house in which, momentarily, I am sheltering a criminal. You'll confess you don't approve of that."

"I told you," Walton responded, "that I don't consider such generosity prudent."

"Let me explain," she said, leaning forward with a charming gesture. "In the first place, there are two kinds of women, the happy and the unhappy. Happy women are all more or less alike. You can easily say in advance just how they are going to act. They are always equal to the occasion, and capable at critical moments of sacrifice really sublime. When you have an unhappy woman before you, you never can tell what she is going to do."

"Are you unhappy?" Walton asked, searching her eyes.

"I have been," Miss Boyd responded.

"I am so sorry," Walton murmured tenderly. How he longed to beg for permission to shield her from whatever outward circumstances had contributed to make her wretched! How he wished that he might have the right to console her! He merely said, "I suppose it's because of your own suffering that you try to help others, that you take into your arms, as it were, people like Marion Hemsley."

"No"—Miss Boyd shook her head. "My taking her into my arms, as you call it, has nothing to do with whatever charitable spirit there may be in me. A moment ago I warned you that you might be disappointed in me—gravely disappointed. I am now going to tell you the worst. I am not what you think me."

"I don't understand." Walton gazed, trying to meet her eyes, which evaded his. He did not know whether he longed most to have her tell him everything or to have her hide from him whatever there might be which would break in upon the spell cast about him by the impression she had made that night.

Miss Boyd continued:

"You think me merely a society girl living up on the west side of New York, in a comfortable house, with plenty of money."

"Yes," Walton nodded.

"I'm all of that, but I'm not only that."

"What else?" he asked quickly. He must hear it all, whatever it be.

"I told you that I was an orphan, alone in the world."

"Yes."

"And with money enough to remain quite idle. There's a great deal of truth, Mr. Walton, in the legend about idle hands and mischief."

"But you seem to me one of the busiest women I have ever known."

"That's because," Miss Boyd answered deliberately—"really because I have a profession."

"A profession?" Walton echoed, looking at her slender little figure in its muslin gown, so graceful under its broad-brimmed hat; her pretty wrists, the delicacy of her tapering fingers. "What profession can you possibly exercise?"

Miss Boyd held out her hand. Walton took it.

"You promise not to be shocked at me?"

"I promise," he said.

For a moment her hand clung to his. Then she confessed:

"I am a detective."

A thousand conflicting thoughts flashed through Walton's brain as she made this statement. At first he thought she was joking. But he felt still the warm grasp of her hand, he believed her to be true.

A detective!

It seemed as if suddenly she were divining his innermost secret, as if she must know the miserable burden of guilt that weighed upon his conscience, as if, by some strange professional instinct, she must have discovered it; that she would make it known, that she would denounce him as a—why, as a thief, before he could atone for the foolish, dissolute weakness of which he had been capable.

He looked at her with dread.

"There!" she said. "I knew you would be disappointed in me. It's shocking, you think, for a woman of the world to exercise a profession which brings her into contact with low, vicious people?"

"Oh, no, no!" Walton just managed to get out this feeble exclamation. "I think that women have the right nowadays to take up any occupation for which they feel themselves fitted. That's all right. Disappointed? Not a bit of it."

He even made a pitiful attempt to laugh.

The waiters, having cleared most of the tables, began turning out the lights on the balustrade which formed the other angle of the roof café.

"We must go," Miss Boyd said, slowly putting on her long gloves.

Walton called a *garçon*, paid his bill, and in a strange state of mind walked away with Miss Boyd—the detective—by his side.

When he had again left her at Eighty-Ninth Street, he took his way home down by the Park as far as Fifty-Ninth, and then across-town. Over and over, as he walked in the warm August night, he thought of all that had happened during the last twenty-four hours, and out of the sea of uncertainty, remorse, and astonishment, which his mind had become, with its tumultuous thoughts; out of all the questions which were clamoring for an answer—what he was to do about finding the certificates, why he ever took them, how he could possibly explain things to Thurston, why Margaret Blair had stolen the ring—the thing he most often repeated to himself was: how much did Miss Boyd know?

### VIII.

THE following morning Helena Boyd opened her eyes very late. The sun was streaming through the shutters across her room. She looked at the alternate bars of light and shade.

"Like prison stripes," she thought, and a little shiver ran across her shoulders. She rang for the maid, asked for her breakfast and the mail. Presently, with a tray daintily set, the servant returned.

"What time is it?" Helena said.

"Nine o'clock, miss," the maid responded. Then she ventured: "There's a box come downstairs. Shall I bring it up?"

"What sort of box?" Helena questioned, pouring from its Dresden china pot the morning coffee.

"Looks like flowers, miss," the servant answered.

"Flowers? Bring them up at once, of course."

They were indeed flowers, a box of splendid color, a whole garden of old-fashioned larkspur, sweet-williams, gilly-flower, marigold, and even zinnia.

Immediately she thought of her strange adventure of the night before, her supper on the roof garden with Walton, their curious meeting, her talk with him, her final confession, his look of amazement, almost horror, when she told him what her occupation was. She could hear his voice now as he echoed with a melancholy note:

*"Detective!"*

That was only the brutal fact regarding her case; and there was so much more! But from the moment she had spoken this much of the truth, it seemed that a wall had risen between them. Had not these flowers been sent to break through the wall, forcing their gentle, perfumed way into her presence? Was it not Walton whose thoughts, the first thing in the morning, had turned to her, as hers now turned to him? She like to believe that he was thinking of her.

But in vain she looked for a card. There was none to tell her from whom the flowers came.

Opening the telephone-book which lay on the table, she looked up Walton's address. She had forgotten to ask it the night before. Only the office number in Wall Street was given. Detaching the receiver, she called up 3424 John.

"Is this Mr. Walton's address? . . . May I speak to him? . . . Not in? . . . Don't know when he will return? . . . Will you give me his house address, please? . . . Fifty-three East Fifty-Five. Thank you."

Then she put down the receiver and reflected. While she took her bath and dressed, she continued to reflect.

She must see Walton again. It was absolutely imperative. How could she find out where he was? Descending slowly to the library, she decided upon a plan. The butler, coming out of the parlor, crossed her in the hall.

"One of the men from the Bureau is there, miss," said the servant.

"In the parlor?"

"Yes, miss."

Helena Boyd paused a moment, then hastily she instructed the servant:

"Call up Rosedale, Mrs. Thurston's country place. Ask for Mr. Walton's telephone number, his residence number—Mr. Henry Walton. Then see if you can get him at his house."

"Yes, miss."

She closed the door behind her and stood before the man from the bureau.

"Mr. Silverton!" she cried. "What a surprise! This is the first time my chief has honored me with a call. Do sit down, and may I ask to what I owe this unusual visit?"

Silverton took a chair. He placed it with its back to the window, so that he could watch closely the expression of his young aid, who sat opposite to him in the full light of the morning sunshine.

"I've got a delicate little matter for you to follow up," Mr. Silverton began.

Helena Boyd leaned forward, all eagerness.

"You're new to the business," her chief continued, "but you've got a woman's delicate touch in matters of intuition, and this is a society job."

"Ah," Helena breathed, intent upon what Mr. Silverton was saying.

"Yes, it's one of those gentleman-thief affairs." He grinned ironically. "I've noticed down at the Bureau that the prison set seems to be moving up, as it were; getting, not more swollen, but sweller, every day. You know, Miss Boyd, there's an old saying, 'It takes a thief to catch a thief.' Well, we've modernized that time-worn adage. We say, 'It takes a society thief to catch a society thief.'"



"But I'm not a society thief," Helena protested violently.

Silverton chuckled.

"My, but we're on the defensive, my little lady! We don't want any nerves in our business. We want the blood to dominate, but it must be cold blood."

"Oh, what an unpleasant image!" Helena shuddered.

"It might be worse if the thermometer were n't up in the eighties. By the way"—Silverton shifted his hat from one knee to the other—"speaking of heat, it's lovely weather for supping on roof gardens, eh?"

"Oh, Mr. Silverton, you know everything! Do you mean to say you really——"

"Yes, ma'am, that's what brings me here this morning. When you came down to the Bureau a few weeks ago and told me you were looking for a job, not because you needed bread-and-butter money, but because, like hundreds of other women, who have not your wisdom, you found time to hang heavy on your hands and consequently you wanted some occupation, do you remember my advice to you? I said, 'Miss Boyd, you'd better keep out of this business. It's not exactly what you might call clean.' But you would hear none of my objections. You declared that fancy-work and cooking-schools for the poor could not absorb you, and that you must be absorbed. I did n't really have much faith in you, to tell the truth."

"I know you did n't, Mr. Silverton, and I thank you all the more."

"But I thought I'd give you a try, anyhow."

"It was most kind of you. I appreciate it, I assure you."

Silverton grinned.

"You haven't done much for us so far."

"Why, no, that's true"—Helena spoke quickly—"but just give me a chance, a real chance, and you'll see that you were not mistaken in trusting me."

"Well"—Silverton held his hat imprisoned between both hands—"we've got a chance for you. It's a very delicate matter; just needs a woman's intuition."

"I ought to have that!" she cried.

"Yes, ma'am," Silverton continued. "For a long time we've been trying to lay our hands on one of these fashionable fellows. There's nothing so picturesque as a real gentleman in stripes. It adds to the tone of prison life, and certainly it can't diminish our credit in the public eye if we pinch a few of the elegant sort who are playing in the market, so to speak."

"Do you mean Wall Street?" Miss Boyd asked.

Silverton barely nodded as he drew out a big handkerchief, passing it over his brow, damp from the heat.

"The job which I want you to take up has just been given us. It's up to us to find out the intentions of a certain well-known broker. We have been informed that he is travelling about the country houses and such, in the possession of bonds amounting to about two hundred thousand dollars. They were placed in his keeping by one of his customers, and if what our client tells us is true, and he is actually going about with these certificates which don't belong to him, why, it's"—Silverton brought out the word deliberately—"it's larceny!"

"Oh!" Helena Boyd breathed this mute exclamation almost inaudibly.

"Yes, ma'am. The only reason a broker could have for carrying about what does n't belong to him is a dishonest reason, whatever it is, and I presume that this man's idea simply was that, as his customer had gone abroad, he might take a little dip into the market without any one being the worse for his using a security that belongs to another fellow."

"His customer has gone abroad, you say?" Helena asked.

"Yes, ma'am. His customer's a personal friend of yours—that's why I came up here this morning. It's Mr. William Thurston."

"And the broker is——?"

"Henry Walton."

"But first of all," Miss Boyd flashed out at him, "who gave you this information?"

Silverton shook his head.

"It's not part of your job to find out that."

"But you aren't going to take any offhand testimony on such a vital matter, and especially against such a man as Mr. Walton?"

"You take your orders from us, Miss Boyd, and we take ours from whom we please. Otherwise we might as well drop right out of the business. You know Mr. Walton. Nothing can be easier for you than to ferret out the truth in this matter."

"Oh, but that's just it. He is a friend of mine. How can I spy on him? Don't ask me to do this, *please*. Anything else but this. You know how eager I am to take up a really absorbing case, but I've been staying under the same roof with Mr. Walton. It does n't seem fair, really, Mr. Silverton."

"All is fair in love and the detective business. And look here, Miss Boyd"—Silverton lifted his forefinger. "Don't suppose, because you refuse, that the matter's going to be dropped. It's going to be pushed right straight through, and just think what a feather it would be in your cap to face Mr. Walton with his crime! It's a nice little job, and we are n't going to leave a stone unturned. I guess we'll have the public sympathy in our favor, and we're not going to miss a trick. Understand?"

"Oh, yes, yes," Helena muttered hurriedly. "Of course, as you say, it's a splendid opportunity to show one's ability, only——"

She was thinking rapidly. Silverton was as good as his word. He had said that if she refused the matter would not be dropped, that it would be pushed straight through. She knew that he meant it. If, indeed, by refusing him now she forced him into employing some one else on the case, the whole truth would be revealed. Her silence and her acceptance were her only chance of saving Walton. By seeming to take the "job" which Silverton now offered, and in this way alone, could she delay matters until Walton was clear again.

"Well?" Silverton asked.

The door opened, and the butler appeared, announcing to Helena:

"I've got that gentleman on the wire, miss."

"Very good. Say I'm coming at once."

"What's my answer?" Silverton reiterated as the door closed on the servant's retreating footsteps.

Helena responded feebly:

"I'll undertake the job." She tried to smile. "You can count on me."

Silverton clasped her trembling fingers in his broad palm.

"A *bona fide* go?" he asked contentedly.

"Yes, yes," she repeated. "To-morrow's Sunday. I'll see you on Monday or Tuesday, as soon as I have anything to report. Now good-by."

"Tuesday at the latest," Silverton specified.

"As early as you like. Good-by, Mr. Silverton."

As he started down the front steps, Helena ran to the telephone.

"Hello! Yes? . . . Are you there? . . . Oh, Mr. Walton, how nice of you to send those lovely flowers! . . . Yes; I guessed that it was you. I want so much to see you. . . . To-day? . . . Yes, but not here. Could you meet me in Central Park, near the lake; where the swans are? . . . Yes. . . . Not far from the Fifty-Ninth Street entrance. . . . In half an hour? . . . Yes, a long half-hour. . . . All right. I'll be delighted to see you again."

She hung up the receiver, leaning heavily against the wall, one arm uplifted, her head resting on it.

But quick! There was no time for reflection; she must act, and act at once.

With a step as light as the wind, she climbed the three flights of stairs to the top of these house, where the servants slept, and there, standing, out of breath, she called:

"Marion Hemsley!"

The door at the end of the hall opened. Marion Hemsley, appearing, answered:

"Yes, Miss Boyd."

"Come down with me to my room at once."

Helena led the way, and when inside of her boudoir she shut the door and locked it. Then, going to a high Louis XVI chiffonier, she opened with a secret spring the top drawer, which yielded to her touch, gliding forward so that she could slip her hand into it and draw out a package of papers. Turning to Marion Hemsley, she said determinedly:

"You must answer whatever I ask. There is no use in your lying to me. I know too much about you—exactly the sort of petty thief you are!"

"Oh, Miss Boyd," the girl murmured, "I'll promise never to begin again. I was foolish. You've been so good to me."

"Yes," Helena answered resolutely; "I've done what I could. I expect you to do what I ask in return."

"Indeed, miss, I'll do anything for you. You've only to tell me what it is."

"Of course you don't suppose for one moment"—Miss Boyd's voice was gentler than it had been—"that I have any doubts as to who stole my diamond bracelet?"

Marion Hemsley threw herself at Helena's feet.

"Oh, for God's sake, have pity on me!" she sobbed.

"Supplications are as void as promises," Miss Boyd said, helping the servant to her feet, and waiting until she was more quiet. Then she continued: "I want you to answer several questions."

"Yes, miss." Marion Hemsley brushed the back of her hand across her eyes, where the tears trembled on her lashes.

"In the first place," Miss Boyd began, "you were in the hall at Rosedale the night before the last, toward four o'clock."

"I was." The answer came very low.

"I want to know who the other woman in the hall was that night."

Marion Hemsley was silent.

"Was it one of the servants?"

"No, miss."

"It will be best for you to tell me at once who it was, if you know."

Marion Hemsley lifted her head, her voice came clearly:

"I don't know, miss, who it was."

"Was it Mrs. Blair?"

"I don't know, miss. I had only been two days at Mrs. Thurston's, myself. I had n't seen the ladies that was staying in the house."

"But you did see that there was a woman in the hall that night?"

"Yes, miss."

"What room did she come out of?"

"I did n't see her come out of any room. I only saw her go up the stairs, after I saw you, miss."

"Ah!"—Helena's voice had a peculiar ring to it—"then you did see me?"

"Yes, miss."

"I was behind you, though."

"I did n't see you coming up the stairs, miss."

"You saw me when I went down?"

"Yes, miss."

"Very good." Helena, hesitating, glanced at the documents in her hand, then she said, "That is enough for the moment. You can go back to your room again, but don't forget," she added, as Marion Hemsley stood on the threshold—"don't forget that I'm going to do all I can for you, but that you are fortunate, to say the least, and that you are quite in my power."

"You'll give me my chance again?" the girl pleaded. "Give it to me as God has given you yours!"

Helena started at these words, then, as Marion Hemsley went out, she shut and bolted the door of her boudoir. She waited until she could no longer hear the sound of footsteps moving in the hall. Going back to the little mahogany chiffonier, she touched again the secret spring and watched the drawer glide forward.

For a moment she paused, as if hesitating, then, lifting the certificates which, all through her interview with Marion Hemsley, she had held tightly clasped in one hand, glancing at them from time to time, she slipped them into the drawer, pushed it back until she heard the spring click. Glancing at the clock on the mantelpiece, she swiftly caught up her gloves, fastened on her hat with two long pins, unlocked the door, sped down the stairs, out of the house, down Eighth Avenue in the direction of the lake—the lake where the swans are, and where she would see Walton again.

She was nervous, agitated, her cheeks were crimson. Silverton's words kept ringing in her ears, hounding her on: if she did not like the case, he would employ some one else.

Near the Fifty-Ninth Street entrance, over by the lake on whose sunny surface the swans were floating about gently, she saw Walton waiting.

## IX.

THE figure of Helena Boyd, in its light linen gown, had not long vanished down Eighth Avenue, when the bell of 37 West Eighty-Ninth Street was rung by a lady who, as the butler opened the door, asked for Marion Hemsley.

The butler's expression was stolid.

"You have her here, I know," the lady said. "A housemaid to whom, momentarily, Miss Boyd has given her protection."



Still the butler was implacable, and the lady, using a more persuasive tone, continued:

"Miss Boyd is a friend of mine, but I myself have come directly from the Salvation Army to see this poor girl."

The butler was a Swede. At the words "Salvation Army" his expression of severity relaxed.

"Very good, ma'am," he said. "Come in, will you? I'll call Marion Hemsley."

The lady went into the parlor, and she did not wait long before Miss Boyd's protégée appeared on the threshold.

"Please come in," the lady said. "I have something to say to you, quite secretly."

Marion Hemsley, closing the door behind her, advanced timidly.

"I know all the circumstances of your arrest and rescue," said the lady, "but be reassured: I come here only because I am sorry for you."

"Thank you, madam," the girl said gratefully.

"Sit down, won't you?"

Encouraged by this almost intimate request, Marion Hemsley slipped into a chair, feeling already for this lady an attraction which Miss Boyd, with her somewhat haughty manner, had never inspired.

"Now," the lady began, "in a case like yours, the great thing is to get away from former surroundings, to shake free from all influences which may have weighed upon you, inducing you to do wrong when your real inward desire is an impulse toward what is good and right."

"Yes, madam," the girl responded; "that's just it. If only I could shake free from the old crowd!"

"I will help you," the lady said.

"God bless you, ma'am! I don't mean to be ungrateful to Miss Boyd here, who's done so much for me, I realize that. Only, it seems like she somehow had me in her power."

"I see."

There was a silence, then the lady continued:

"I am interested in a society for delinquent girls. I shall see that you are received into it. You do not need to give your name or any address of your former whereabouts. We believe that the greatest thing in life is faith. If only people had more faith, the world would be regenerated. On a small scale, we have found that confidence has been equivalent to reform. Each time we have really shown trust in a girl, she has completely responded and mended her ways."

"Yes, ma'am," Marion Hemsley answered. "It's what I've been asking Miss Boyd here: just to give me my chance, as God gave her hers."

The lady drew from her glove a little folded slip of paper on which was printed an address.

"There," she said, "at any time that you wish to start for this Home, you will find here the instructions for reaching your destination, and before you leave I will give you the money you need. Now," she added, "there is something I want you to do for me."

"God!" the girl cried, "I'd do anything for you. You're giving me my chance!"

"By a curious coincidence," said the lady, "Miss Boyd happens to have in her possession some documents which rightly should be in my keeping. They are of no importance to her, but upon them depends a really tremendous affair for me."

"Documents?" the girl repeated.

"Yes, printed papers. It's just possible you may happen to know where Miss Boyd keeps them."

"This ain't a trick, is it?" Marion Hemsley asked, narrowing her eyelids.

"I have told you the exact truth, how I intend to save you."

"You know I am grateful."

"Yes, but you must show your gratitude. These papers are of the greatest importance to me."

"It seems like a mean thing to do," the maid responded.

"Do you know where the documents have been placed?"

"I think I do."

"Then," said the lady, "you must tell me. You want an opportunity to show your gratitude to me. This is it. I will say even more: I can do nothing until you have told me where I shall find what I am looking for."

Marion Hemsley drew nearer to the lady and whispered:

"I saw her put them in her secretary drawer. It has a secret spring. She did n't know I was looking, but she treated me hard. She kept saying, 'You are in my power, you understand.' When she shut the door and bolted it, I pretended to go upstairs. I did n't, though; I just hid in the next room and looked through the keyhole. All the time she had been talking to me, she held those things in her hand, sort of hesitating, like she wanted me to take them. She said nothing, but I guess them's the ones I saw her put back in the secretary drawer. I saw where the secret spring was, too."

"Well?" the lady urged.

Marion Hemsley opened the door stealthily. She listened a moment in the hall, then she whispered, "Come!"

Together they sped up the stairs into the boudoir where Helena Boyd a few moments before had talked with Marion Hemsley.

"I will stand watch at the window," the lady assured. "You open the secretary."

For a time the girl tried, running her fingers along the smooth sur-

face of the Louis XVI chiffonier. At last there was the click of a spring. The top drawer glided forward. She turned, and in a low voice called to the lady, who was waiting in the window:

"See, they are here. You had better come and take 'em!"

The lady slipped her hand in the drawer, and, lifting out the securities, studied them for an instant. The color flashed brilliant into her cheeks.

"You are a good girl!" she said to Marion Hemsley.

"You'll give me my chance?"

"You shall leave now with me, if you wish. Come quickly and take whatever things you may have here. I have a motor at the door. You can go in it with me to the station. Make haste, though; there's no time to lose. Go put on your hat. I shall wait for you downstairs in the taxi. Here!" she added, slipping something from her pocketbook.

Marion Hemsley gazed at it in astonishment.

"For me?" she whispered.

It was a fifty-dollar bill. The lady nodded, and then took her way downstairs, stepping softly. As she sat in the taxi, waiting for Marion Hemsley, she turned over in her slender fingers the papers which she had taken from Helena Boyd's secretary drawer.

They were Walton's stolen certificates, the securities which Thurston had placed in his keeping when he left for Europe, and of which Walton had been robbed at Rosedale. The lady folded them away securely in the bag she carried with her.

When Marion Hemsley had taken her place in the taxi, the lady directed the chauffeur:

"Drive down Eighth Avenue to Forty-Second Street."

"Ain't I going to get out of New York?" Marion Hemsley asked.

"At Forty-Second Street," the lady responded, consulting a watch which hung in the lace folds of her blouse, "we can turn east and reach the New York Central depot by eleven forty-five. At twelve there is the express for Smithville, where the Home will open its doors to you. I will put you on the train myself."

"My!" the girl cried, "but I'm glad I met you. Only, what'll happen to Miss Boyd? I'm jumping my bail."

"You're taking your chance to begin again, to make a new life for yourself, honest, free."

"The bail was three hundred dollars." Marion Hemsley spoke with honest regret.

## X.

It was after three o'clock when Helena Boyd returned home. As she reached the door, there was an expression of radiant happiness on her pretty face, as though some very sweet memories were drifting still

across her mind, drifting like the pure white swans on the sunny surface of the Central Park lake.

She went directly to her room, threw herself down on her divan. To the maid who came presently, bringing some letters, she said:

"It's so dreadfully hot, Jenny, please make me a glass of lemonade, iced, and then let down the awnings."

She fell to musing on her long stroll in the Park. How delicious had been their visit to the silent deserted paths, where only the twittering sparrows, the little gray squirrels, or an occasional sleepy tramp recalled them from the dreamy romance of their conversation together on every subject that embraced the deep sentiments of life and the strange, elusive spell of love!

Instinctively, her eyes turned toward the mahogany chiffonier. Ah, what would she give now if she had not at Rosedale, under the spur of her professional ambition, taken those miserable papers, stolen them that night from Walton. It was an insane thing to do, but she presaged Silverton's delight when, with the papers in her hand, she would force Walton to a confession.

Force him to a confession!

Ah, it seemed that the only confession she longed now to hear from Walton's lips was one of love. Her perplexity was very great.

Lifting her arms behind her head, she sighed:

"What *shall* I do? What *shall* I do? Whatever happens, *he* must be saved."

The maid had returned with a glass of lemonade, in which the ice tinkled its little song. She drew up a small table, set down her tray by the *chaise longue*, before lowering the awnings.

"That's all," Miss Boyd said to her. "You need not wait. What time is it?"

"It's just past three, miss."

As the maid left, Miss Boyd's eyes again wandered toward the chiffonier, as if lured there by some hypnotic power. She finished the iced lemonade, settled herself on the lounge, and began to think seriously.

During her conversation with Walton, as they had strolled through the Park and as they had sat together lunching in a little down-town restaurant, she had not dared confess to him that it was she who at Rosedale in the depths of the night had stolen from him the precious papers. She could not bring herself to tell him.

As one might gaze at the iridescence of a soap bubble, her memory clung to the moments of happiness passed in Walton's presence, which must come so soon to an end. She herself must, of course, restore the bonds. But to-morrow was Sunday, and Monday was Labor Day. There was plenty of time before Tuesday at twelve o'clock, in which

she might continue to see Walton without his suspecting her perfidy. What touched her more than anything was that he, desperately anxious as she knew he must be, had showed nothing of his distress. If, as he supposed, the certificates were irrevocably gone, then his last vestige of honor had departed with them. This was a fairly strong pitch of emotion for a man to be living under, and Walton had been as calm, as indifferent to his professional fate, as he seemed ardent in the pursuing of his sentimental destiny. At first the knowledge that Miss Boyd was a detective had made him appear a trifle distrustful. Little by little, though, she had won his confidence by giving him hers.

They had passed an ideal morning together, and as Helena Boyd thought it all over she admitted to herself that Walton seemed to be happy, and that she was more than a little interested. This was as much as she would allow to herself, but there was all the rest that she did not put into words; for inwardly she knew that Walton was in love with her and that she had begun to care for him.

As she lay, her slender figure stretched out on the couch, an idea occurred to her. Since sooner or later she must confess that it was she who had the bonds, it was a lack of moral courage on her part not to tell Walton now. It would mean hastening her own humiliation, it would mean perhaps losing at once the unutterable comfort of Walton's tender esteem, but by revealing the truth she could spare him at least two days of suffering. It was clearly right that she should do this—should take the certificates immediately to Walton and explain everything to him.

Not once in Helena's meditations had the thought occurred to her that she might care less for Walton because of what he had done. Like a true woman, she was appealed to by his audacity and by his weakness. She admired in him the apparent contempt with which he awaited his fate. He attracted her as the outlaw who scorns the world's opinion, and he touched her as the reckless culprit who awakens in every woman's heart the passion of motherly tenderness. She felt vaguely, and yet with an instinct that was impelling, that he had need of her, that she, in some measure, represented for him a hope. Inevitably, this tacit dependence of Walton upon her called forth that distinctly feminine indulgence which ceases to judge, whatever the case, when appealed to by the sense that, to a man in trouble, protection can be of use. Moreover, there was a thought which haunted her: her part of responsibility in what Walton had done. How many had been the financiers, the very women indeed of one's acquaintance, whose temptations, if revealed, would have made sinners of them at once, but who, given the chance to reflect, had not put into action the methods for satisfying their reckless greed! Walton—she felt as sure of it as of her trust in the innocence of her own motives when she had taken



the documents—Walton, on better thoughts, would have restored Thurston's bonds, with no further transactions made than the mere transferring of them from his valise back to the strong-box in his office. It was she who, indirectly, had kept him from this better course of his own highest instincts.

She got up from the *chaise longue* slowly. Going to the chiffonier, she repeated Margaret Blair's gestures of a few hours before. But her hand, travelling on its journey of inquiry, made no encounter with the familiar pile of crisp engraved certificates. Pulling the drawer full out, she ransacked it, shook it until its frame rattled, tapped helplessly on the panels of wood, as if they might hold something hidden from her. It was all useless. She continued her search feverishly, frantically. The bonds were not in the chiffonier, the drawer was empty. Like a flash came the thought of Marion Hemsley.

Helena Boyd rang, but without waiting for the servant to answer, she called. Climbing to the top floor, her voice rang out clearly through the empty halls. There was no answer. Pushing open the door, she found Marion Hemsley's room empty.

"What has become of the girl I brought here last night?" she asked the butler, meeting him, breathless, at the top of the stairs.

"Have n't seen her, miss."

"Call the other servants. Ask them."

They were questioned. No one had seen Marion Hemsley.

"Has any one been here from the office?"

The butler replied.

"Not from the office, miss. There was a lady here about eleven o'clock. She said she came from the Salvation Army to see Marion Hemsley, so I let her in."

"Salvation Army!" Helena cried. "Oh, this is too much! The girl has gone, escaped, jumped her bail, and, what is worse, has taken with her documents which I value more than anything in the world."

"Shall I call up Mr. Silverton?" suggested the butler.

"Yes, call him up at once. No, no, don't call him up! It's too awful. I don't know what I can do."

What indeed could she do? To call up Silverton would be to expose everything. To tell Walton would be adding to his already too great agony. She threw herself down upon the lounge, sobbing in despair.

## XI.

WALTON meanwhile had gone back to his rooms in East Fifty-Fifth Street. The sweet memories of his walk with Miss Boyd in the Park, their lunch together in this new romantic intimacy which seemed to make of them desperate friends at once, softened the cruel anguish to

which his present situation made him a prey. Two days more of grace: the Sunday and the Monday, in which he hoped to see Miss Boyd without her having found him out! For, evidently, even in her capacity as detective, she had not discovered what had taken place at Rosedale. Beyond those two red-letter intervals, all was black as night: the discovery by Thurston of his misplaced confidence, the denunciation of his broken trust, the damp, dank odor of the prison cell.

"Ah!" Walton pressed his hands across his brow. "How lenient guilt makes a man! Virtue seems to have an inevitable touch of cruelty."

His mind could not free itself of a certain haunting image: he saw with vivid intensity the delicate face of Margaret Blair as she had sat before him in his office two days before, pleading for the man she loved.

How hard he had been! How he had scorned her appeal and mocked at her threat of vengeance! Yet his punishment had come fast enough! And in his misery he took pity on others. Dudley Kendal's financial difficulties had seemed to merit no special indulgence as Margaret Blair had pleaded for him. Walton's own despair now, at the situation in which he found himself, the new, absorbing sentiment which during the hours spent with Helena Boyd had made him, for the first time in his life, happy, softened him strangely toward Mrs. Blair's lover. A sickening disgust at the impotence of money to produce any real joy, at its power to accomplish evil, to work destruction and sin, detached him momentarily from all interest in the battle of business which had claimed his forces hitherto. The world now seemed to him not a place in which to get rich merely, but one wherein contentment was to be found through the cherishing of an ideal, given form by some impelling sentiment. To have forgiven Dudley Kendal his debts on that afternoon of the previous week, when Mrs. Blair had been in Walton's office, would have seemed a sacrifice beyond what should be asked of any human. The sum was important, to be sure, if reckoned in mere dollars and cents, but had it been twice the amount, he would have given it now without a sensation of parting with something truly dear. No, his own peace of mind was something not to anticipate, but there was for him a satisfaction in feeling that, miserable as he himself was, he still had it in his power that two people who loved each other should through him be able, with a joy that was complete, to start life together as man and wife. The certainty that his given word of honor, cancelling the weight of heavy indebtedness, would—while it was perhaps the last thing he could do for any one—make for Kendal and Mrs. Blair a paradise on earth, led him to action. Sitting down at his desk, he wrote and signed the release for which Margaret Blair had begged. With a note explaining that he excused her friend entirely, he sent her this token of his own indifference to all that was material,

his suddenly awakened interest in the welfare of those who suffer and who love.

Had he known in advance what loneliness was staring him in the face, Walton could never have got through that Sunday and that Monday.

Consulting for the hundredth time, on Tuesday morning, the little clock which stood on his desk, he asked himself how it was possible that time should go always at the same rate. There must be, he thought, minutes of various sizes, just as there were drops of different dimensions. A tear was surely heavier than a mere drop of dew, and the twice twenty-four hours which he had just traversed in solitude must, he knew, be longer than any conventional two days.

It seemed a hundred years back, his parting on Saturday with Helena Boyd.

Why had she telephoned to him Sunday morning that she was leaving town? Was it true?

"No doubt," Walton concluded with melancholy, "we are the makers of our own disappointments. For each ever so slight uncertainty on our own part, we pay the penalty of a deception on the part of others."

He had in a measure, he admitted to himself, deceived Helena Boyd. Preoccupied as he was that Tuesday morning, by all the hour threatened, it was not of the misappropriated securities that he was thinking. His mind got no further than Helena Boyd. It rested before the vivid image of her frail, intense little figure. Yes, he had deceived her, he had let her think that he was an honest man, that there was no reason why he should not show her all the attention that she was willing to accept. He had indeed avoided the slightest avowal which could make her suspect his present predicament.

They were to have spent Sunday together. This had been her promise as she left him on Saturday. Why, then, at the moment in all his life when he most needed her, had she thus failed him? Was it that, from some outside source, from Mrs. Thurston perhaps, whose husband was in constant communication with her, she had learned the ugly news? Would this have kept her absent, without explanation of any sort?

Walton looked at the clock again. It was eleven. Eleven on the morning of Tuesday. At twelve, if Thurston's securities had not been handed in at the Sixth National Bank, Walton would be a doomed man. He smiled bitterly.

Life indeed for the last two days had been suggestive of prison. The janitor's wife had cooked his meals, serving them in his rooms, where he had remained alone, not going down for a breath of air. As he had successively reviewed the various projects for escape which

presented themselves as a possible solution for his present situation, each had seemed more impossible than the last. Patience was the only alternative at this moment, when nothing was so hard as to wait.

As he sat dejected, gazing at the little clock, there was a light rap. Before he had time to answer, the door was opened and closed again. With a swift movement that brought her like some sudden apparition of life before him, Helena Boyd stood there, leaning toward him, so beautiful, so pale.

"Helena!" he cried, not knowing what he said. "Oh, forgive me!"

She let her hand lie in his.

"Hush!" she said. "You must not ask my forgiveness."

"You came!" he murmured. "I could not have hoped such a thing."

"Of course I came," she answered. Glancing toward the door, she asked, "How sure are we of being alone here?"

"No one ever comes," said Walton. "But *you* came."

"I mean," she insisted, "what danger is there of my being overheard?"

"None whatever. This floor and the one below belong to me. The other rooms are locked, and I have the keys here." He touched his pocket, and then again, gazing at her with passionate gratitude, he said, "You came!"

Helena Boyd drew up a chair near the one in which she had found Walton on her arrival. She begged him to sit down by her. It seemed as if, in her presence, reality sank shamefaced into some shadowy corner.

"There's so much to be said"—her tone was very earnest—"I scarcely know where to begin."

"Begin anywhere," he urged, "repeat as often as you will. Oh, why did n't you come yesterday? Why did n't you come Sunday? I've almost lost my mind!"

"I could n't come," she said. "I was working, working for us both, for you and me."

"For us both," Walton echoed, soothed by this little pronoun which found place to include him with her.

"Yes, but first," she said, "I have a confession to make to you."

"You a confession! You mean, rather, don't you, that you want me to confess?"

"No, no! You must listen to me!"

She had moved her chair so that she sat facing him. Her delicate figure, like the live stem of a living plant, was held in its little green frock, from which emerged, like a flower, her sweet face. She was pale, like a lily, Walton thought, as pure, as perfect.

"I am listening," he said, resisting the temptation to stretch out his arms and clasp her to him, to cry out his defiance of all else in the world but love, his love, his passionate love for her.

"Let me tell you," she said, troubled by his ardent gaze. "You'll never believe me—it's extraordinary. I can hardly realize it myself—so much has happened in so short a time."

"Begin at the beginning, the very beginning," Walton pleaded, like a child who is listening to a fairy story.

"The beginning?" she echoed.

"Yes," said Walton. "The day I arrived at Rosedale station. Before I saw you, I heard your voice saying, 'Is this Mr. Walton?' It seemed as if I had found then and there the very person whom I had come to meet."

She laughed.

"It was I who had come to meet you."

"God bless you, it was! But that was the beginning. Everything for me began at that moment of encounter when I turned and saw you standing there on the platform in the wind, your beautiful hair imprisoned like so much sunlight by the ribbon which encircled your little head. You had on a blue dress, a pale blue linen dress——"

"Oh!" Helena Boyd laughed. "You remember even that detail!"

"Everything, everything, from that moment on, is graven on my memory. Oh, God!"—his voice sounded like a sob—"why did n't I know you sooner?"

"Ah," she said, growing suddenly very serious again, "that's just it. Mr. Walton, I——"

"Yes?" he urged, leaning toward her, eager. How he hoped that she would speak to him of the frightful burden that lay like lead upon his shoulders, the burden of sin! It seemed that if she only guessed his guilt, all would be easier for him. He agonized at the thought that perhaps she still trusted him—*him!*

Helena Boyd repeated his name very softly, almost in a whisper.

"Mr. Walton," she said, "I know all about it, everything."

"You know?"

"Yes, and it concerns me more than you can have any idea. I have had my share in all that has happened."

"Your share? How can that be explained?"

"The certificates. You understand—Mr. Thurston's securities."

Ah, Heaven! Then she did know all!

A moment ago he had longed to make her his confidante; now he dreaded the condemnation to which her discovery would inevitably lead.

"You know?" he repeated, and the melancholy note of his melodious voice sounded like a dirge.



"I don't wonder you're amazed," she said. "I have no business to know. It's dreadful, it's wrong, but you'll forgive me, won't you?"

Forgive her? It was she who asked forgiveness!

Both of her hands lay an instant in his as he caught them to him. They were trembling, and he longed with all his soul to put his arms about her, to enfold her.

"Forgive you?" he asked, a world of tender emotion in his eyes as they met hers. "Forgive you?"

"You know," she went on slowly, "I told you that I was a detective. I see now all the stupid vanity of such a thing. No doubt I was lonely in my life. No doubt I needed occupation. If I had been intellectual, I should have studied Greek or mathematics, I suppose; if I had been truly benevolent, I might have devoted myself to the poor; but I was none of these things. I was just a modern girl longing for excitement, and it seemed to me that detective work would be the most thrilling kind of sport." She laughed pitifully. "Little did I think then of the human side of such an occupation."

## XII.

HELENA's voice had sunk very low. She waited a moment and then continued, looking straight into Walton's eyes:

"If you are in such a dreadful plight to-day, it's not your fault."

"Not my fault?" he echoed.

"No, it's mine," she said.

"Yours?"

"Yes, yes," she hurried on, lifting her hand as if to keep Walton from protesting. "You would have put back the certificates. I know it. I am sure of it. You had already more than half decided to do so when you took them. I know it, I tell you, I feel it."

"How can this be?" asked Walton, as if he would bless her.

"I am a judge of men," she responded to his thoughts. "Moreover, you know, women have an instinct which is surer as a guide than mere knowledge. Everybody has in him two selves, the one which the world knows from its outward appearance, its worldly position, its social status. This side the world estimates from the purely conventional point of view which all these things imply. But then, there is the other, the true, real self which has nothing to herald it, so to speak, and which makes itself known only to those who have a sort of invisible contact with its most secret being, an understanding without explanation. The sudden sympathy with which I was drawn to you that afternoon on the platform at Rosedale, as if for years we had been friends, has made me thus sure of my feeling that you were incapable of any lasting wrong about those wretched certificates."

"Yes?" Another question was on Walton's tongue, which Miss Boyd anticipated.

"Patience," she answered. "You want to find out where your certificates are?"

Walton's glance sought the little clock on the mantelpiece: twenty minutes past eleven. She had said, "Patience." In forty minutes it would be too late. At twelve o'clock the truth would be known.

"Patience?" Walton's tone was ironical.

"I want to tell you my story," Miss Boyd answered, clasping her hands and looking down at them as if, between the shell-like palms, lay hidden some secret she longed not to divulge. "I had been some time in the service of the Silverton Bureau."

"Oh!" Walton shuddered at the name.

"But I had done nothing for them. Mr. Silverton really took me on the force somewhat against his will. He did not quite see what I *could* do for them, but I was sure I might be of use, and his very scepticism fired me with a longing to prove that he was wrong. Only, I did not realize that if Mr. Silverton finally consented to employ me, it was because he believed I could 'do a nice job,' to use his expression, in society, among my own friends." She paused a moment, and then added, with a hopeless little gesture: "You see how worthless, how utterly good-for-nothing, I am. My vanity was paramount. I wanted a feather in my cap. The price I might pay for it mattered little, I longed to do something that no one thought a woman could do, to show my keenness of intelligence in some unusual way. How foolish I was then! But then," she added very sadly—"then I did not know you!"

"Ah!" Walton answered. "Then we did not know each other."

"No doubt," she continued, "you must wonder how I found out that the securities were in your possession?"

Walton shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

"Only one person could have told you: Flossie Thurston. She knows all her husband's business affairs. Or," he added, his eyes narrowing as he reflected, "it may have been Mrs. Blair—Margaret Blair?"

"I don't mean," Helena Boyd pursued, "how I knew Thurston's business with you, not that. What I mean is, you must wonder how I, a stranger, could have found out that you, a stranger, had in your possession at Rosedale securities to the amount of two hundred thousand dollars, and to which you had no more right than if—if——"

Walton finished the sentence deliberately:

"Than if I had stolen them."

There was an instant's silence. The little clock on the mantelpiece struck the half-hour—half past eleven.

"How calm you are!" Helena Boyd observed.

"What use to beat about the prison bars?"

"But," she said, "you show no surprise at my finding out that the papers were in your valise. No one told me," she went on, "and I was the only person to know it at Rosedale."

"No one told you?"

"Oh," she breathed very low, "don't you realize that I am trying to tell you, without telling you? Don't you understand, Mr. Walton, that it was I, I, who stole the certificates from you?"

"Good God!"

"Yes, it was I who took them out of your valise, while you were sleeping that night at Rosedale. I who am a——"

She bowed her head on her hands.

"But how could you?" Walton asked. For one instant his glance again caught sight of the hour as it advanced with a slow, sure stroke toward twelve. If Helena Boyd had indeed taken Thurston's certificates and had them now in her keeping, why, then there was still some hope. . . .

"You came to Rosedale in the afternoon," she continued, speaking very rapidly, "at about five o'clock. A certain restlessness had tormented me ever since I had taken up this work with Silverton. You can understand: the feeling that I had promised to be of use and that I was simply so much dead wood. The night of your arrival I had the do-or-die sort of feeling. I dressed expressly early. Before any meal in a big country house, there is always half an hour or more when you find the house downstairs absolutely empty. The servants are in the kitchen, the masters in their rooms; there may be some one in the pantry, but you have the lower floor practically to yourself. That evening, while every one was getting ready for dinner, the telephone rang. I went to it at once. No one else had heard the bell, no one came. I don't know why, but I had a presentiment that I was going to learn something of importance. Silverton says that 'all is fair in love and the detective service.' I can't now understand how I could have yielded, even under the impulse of professional honor, to such a temptation as eavesdropping through the telephone, but, at all events, that was what I did. Wait until you have heard all before you judge me."

"Judge you!"

"As I lifted the receiver, I heard a man's voice say, 'Is that you, Walton?' Imitating your voice as best I could, I answered, 'Yes; who is this?' 'Judson,' the voice replied. I had heard Thurston say that your partner's name was Judson, so I listened. The connection was poor. Owing to the crossing of the long-distance wires, Mr. Judson did not hear me enough to know it was not you."

"But," Walton said, looking at her with astonishment, "what did Judson say?"

"It seems too horrible," she answered, "to be retailing this information which I took without any right whatever to Mr. Judson's confidence. I seemed that night to have been keyed up to a false sense of the obligations imposed upon me by what I was trying to do, and which made me forget everything else. Oh, if I could only live over that moment!"

"Don't regret in this way," Walton urged. "It's so clear that you were doing only what you considered at the time to be your duty. What was it that Judson said?"

"He told you that Thurston had cabled to have the securities placed at the Sixth National Bank before noon on Monday. 'But the worst of it is,' he explained, 'I can't find the securities anywhere. I've made a thorough search. As you're expecting to be out of town, I thought it better to let you know at once. The wireless message came in about half an hour after you left the office.' I could hear Judson chuckling as he said, 'I reckon Mr. Thurston must have met on the steamer some foreigner who has inveigled him into buying, without seeing it, his old family estate. He is in sudden need of money.' Then he said, 'Where are the securities, Walton, old man?' I almost dropped the receiver, but, making my voice no more distinct than necessary, I got up courage to respond, 'Can't hear you.' Judson kept calling, 'Be down in the morning? All right, old man. Sorry to interrupt your little outing. Good-by.'"

Helena Boyd sank back as if exhausted. She had mimicked Judson's voice in a wonderful way, and the whole scene at the telephone was vivid.

"By Jove!" Walton cried. "What an actress you are!"

"I am worse than that," she whispered. Laying both her hands against her brow, she went on nervously, "When everybody had gone to bed, I sat up waiting in my room. Toward four o'clock I crept downstairs. It was all true what I told you about being in the hall."

"But how could you get into my room without my hearing you? I had locked my door. How could you suppose that I had the papers with me?"

"When you arrived that afternoon, Mrs. Thurston said to you that a servant would take your valise upstairs and unpack it for you. Impulsively you cried out, 'Oh, no, thank you!' I watched you. You made an effort not to seem disturbed, but there was sincerity in the tone of your 'Oh, no!' Politely but very firmly, you insisted that you would not trouble the servant. I knew at once that you were hiding some secret in your valise. I supposed, of course, it was love-letters. When Judson's message came I put two and two together."

"How did you get into my room?"

"I did n't. I came only into the closet. I supposed your valise was there. That closet opens also into the next room, which is a spare room. There was no one sleeping there, and I had made sure of the key before dinner."

"But I locked that door myself," Walton said.

"You locked it with the key of the door on your side of the closet. I heard you. I had already taken the duplicate key of the door on the other side. Once I had crept into the closet under the shelves, it did not take me long. I often hide things in the lining of my own suit-case."

"Then it was actually you?"

Helena Boyd nodded.

"I stole them, yes."

"Heaven be praised!" Walton cried.

"You're not *glad*!"

"You're the only person about whose opinion I really care now, and perhaps you're the only one who would n't despise me."

### XIII.

"Ah," Helena said, appealing to him with all the tenderness of her beautiful eyes, "we have both made a terrible mistake, to take what did not belong to us. But in doing so we were willing, like adventurers, to suffer the consequences of the law, just the ordinary consequences. You were blinded by the easiness whereby it was possible to alter your fortune with only an ever so slight risk of being found out. I was tempted by the feminine longing to 'find out.' How could I imagine that what I was doing would prove such a fiasco to my own hopes? How could I have dreamed," she cried, growing more excited as she spoke, "that what I did would mean the betrayal of the man I love!"

The words had come out. She could not take them back.

Walton put his arm about her and drew her to him.

"Helena! Say it again! Say that you love me! It's worth all the condemnation of the world and the law just to hear you give that little cry, 'The man I love!'"

She hid her face against his breast, clung to him.

"How can it be repaired, what I have done?"

He drew back, his hands on her shoulders, smiling radiantly down at her.

"But," he said, "if you took the papers, you have them still. We can reach the bank before twelve. It's only a quarter to now."

"You don't know the worst," she answered slowly: "the securities were taken from me. I got out on bail that girl Marion Hemsley,



because I thought she saw me that night in the corridor. I was afraid of her and of what she might say. While I was out with you on Saturday, some one came to the house. I don't know who—a lady—she said she came from the Salvation Army. Marion Hemsley escaped with her, and they took with them the certificates. When I got back, everything was gone. All day Sunday and Monday I worked, worked, trying to get track of them. I could not give the alarm for your sake, for mine. It would have been to avow at once what I hoped to hide until the end, but now—now——”

“Now,” Walton said slowly, “we might as well give up all hope. But who could the woman have been?”

“I don't know. I can't imagine.”

“Margaret Blair's vengeance,” he murmured to himself. “She has done her work well.”

Helena was weeping. The sight of her tears drove from Walton's mind all other thoughts.

“Dearest,” he whispered, “there's such a short time to spend together. Let us forget everything except the joy you have given me in coming thus, in telling me all.”

“Oh,” she sobbed, “it is I who have done this!”

“Be happy!” He held her close to him. “In a few moments they will come to arrest me.”

She shuddered.

“No, no, you must escape!”

“Impossible!” His tone was firm.

“But there is time. They don't know at the bank that you are here.”

“Yes,” Walton said; “I telephoned them this morning. I had a lingering hope that Thurston might have sent another message. I told them where I was. I'd rather have them know. Why prolong the agony? I shall not attempt to escape. But you must not be found here.”

“You're going to send me away?” Helena pleaded. “I'll dry my tears, I promise you. I'll live these last instants with you so that we may both remember them in the terrible hours of separation.”

She drew close, resting her delicate weight against him, so close that she could feel his heart beat. Lifting her arms to place them about his neck, she caressed him, kissing his eyes, his hair, his brow, giving him her lips to kiss.

Walton breathed a new life into his soul with this embrace. It seemed that, when all this frightful trial was past, he would have strength to begin again with such a love to sustain him.

“Afterward,” he whispered, “will you go with me?”

“Yes.”

"No matter how disgraced I am?"

"I love you."

"Will you wait for me?"

"Until you come, no matter how long it may be."

"God bless you!"

"I only ask," Helena said, "that when at last we are together again, I shall be able to compensate for all you have suffered—for all that I have made you suffer."

"You!"

"Yes," she answered firmly. "It was I who made you live up to your worst impulse. No doubt we have all been traversed with wicked temptations, we have all been angry enough to kill, envious enough to steal, jealous enough to hate, but these dreadful thoughts come only like dashes of shadow across the light. Think how many of us would be criminals if some one were always there to make possible the accomplishment of our bad desires! Yet this is what I have done for you. You never would have gone to the end of your impulse to use dishonestly what was not yours by right. It is I who have cast in the irrevocable mould of sin what was only a passing weakness."

"To you I can explain," Walton said tenderly, "that my own true self, as you call it, had got the better of me that very afternoon when I went to my room at Mrs. Thurston's. There is no doubt, to my mind, that I should have replaced Thurston's collateral where it belonged, with no further harm done than the anguish of a few hours face to face with the full consciousness of what I had done, had you not——"

"Oh, you see!" Helena moaned. "It is all my fault."

Walton's eyes were full of love as he looked at her.

"If you had not been at Rosedale, I should never have met you. That thought is more unbearable than any reality."

"Ah!"—she gave a little cry of gratitude.

"Yes," he answered; "I was an honorable man in despair. Now I am a—a thief—full of hope, because you love me."

"Beloved!"

A moment she rested in his embrace, and then suddenly, as though some electric shock had traversed them, they sprang apart.

The telephone had rung by Walton's side.

He picked up the receiver, listened for a moment, a look of amazement in his eyes, then in a hoarse voice he said:

"Repeat that, please."

Helena watched him as he listened. Was it good news or bad, that so suddenly intensified his expression, brought the moisture to his brow, made his voice sound faint?

Dropping the receiver back on its hook, he let his head fall forward on his hands; a sob escaped from him.

Helena knelt by his side, both arms about him. She dared not speak. He let his hands wander, touching her brow, her hair, her shoulders, as one in a dream touches unreal things.

"Tell me again that you love me," he whispered.

"Better than life."

"It's not out of pity that you say that?" he urged.

"No, no, can't you see? Tell me, are they coming to take you from me?"

He looked at her with a long gaze, as if he would draw her with him out of the shadow into the light again. Then he said:

"The certificates are at the bank."

"Ah, God is good!" she cried.

"I could ask no questions. I could not show my surprise. They simply announced the receipt of Thurston's securities."

"Who can have brought them back?" She drew herself up, sitting close beside him, leaning her face against his.

"Some merciful Providence," he said. "I've got something to offer you now, a name that is still honorable."

"It's you I love," she murmured.

"True for us both," he said.

She smiled, her face close against his.

"I won't be a detective any more," she affirmed.

"One capture is enough?" he asked.

"Won't Silverton be surprised?" she cried, very serious. "But we've learned a dreadful lesson. Oh, good God!" she cried as the telephone rang again.

This time Walton's expression reassured her. He took the message and smilingly repeated to her.

"They forgot to tell me that the certificates were not the only things left at the bank. There was also a box containing a diamond ring. You remember at Rosedale that evening when Margaret Blair showed us a wonderful ring?"

"Yes, of course," assented Helena.

"She had taken it from my office, where she found it, through my stupid carelessness, lying on the floor."

"Then it was she?" Helena asked.

Walton nodded.

"She is the lady from the Salvation Army," Helena repeated.

"Evidently," Walton argued. "You see, this ring is the proof. But how could she know that you had the papers in your keeping?"

"She saw me that night in the hall," said Helena. "Silverton perhaps questioned her, as he did me."

"Silverton questioned you about this miserable affair?"

With a gesture of despair, Walton bowed his head in his hands.

"Only in an unprofessional way," Helena said humbly. "He thought I could use my worldly influence to help him ferret out the matter."

"Oh!" Walton shuddered. "It seems unbearable that Silverton, that low creature, should have discussed this with you."

"Yes, but he must have been employed by some one to take up this affair, and I cannot understand who that person was. Could it have been——" Helena hesitated.

"Margaret Blair?" Walton finished for her.

"Margaret was desperate."

"That does n't seem reason enough, and, any way, how could she have known?" Walton said.

"Could it have been Judson who told her?"

Walton looked at her for a moment.

"This is the first time you have shown your real aptitude as a detective," he smiled. "I believe it was Judson."

"You don't suppose he actually *told* her?" said Helena, woman-like, horrified at her own suggestion being taken seriously.

"I don't mean in any malicious way," Walton explained. "But Margaret has known Judson all her life. I had been away from the office, the certificates were missing, Judson knew of Thurston's cable to place the bonds at the bank before noon on Tuesday. It was a horrible predicament for him in case I did not turn up. He may have told her—with a little urging on her part—all that she needed to know to take Silverton into her employ."

"How perfectly horrible!" cried Helena.

"Well, you know," Walton said suggestively, "detectives go into the business with the hope of being employed."

"But," Helena argued, "this was spying on an old friend."

"One whom she thought had failed her," Walton said. "And I believe she was right. She has, in fact, been far more generous than I. When I signed that release, there was no merit in it for me. In my state of mind at that moment, it was about the only thing that could have given me any comfort. Yet Margaret forgave at once."

"But think," Helena said wisely, "what a vengeance she had been contemplating!"

"Poor Margaret!" Walton murmured. Then there was a long silence.

Taking her place at last by Walton on the deep sofa near the window, Helena put a little kiss on his cheek, and said:

"You know when a woman hates as much as Mrs. Blair seemed to hate you, it means only one thing."

"What does it mean, darling?"

"That she's been dreadfully in love with you."

"Not in this case."

"Honestly?"

"Honestly."

"Well, then," Helena sighed, "if she did n't love you and you never loved her, why did you give her the ring?"

"I did n't give it to her. She took it. I explained that to you, dearest."

"Is it true?"

"Absolutely."

"Cross your heart?"

Walton stooped and kissed his little fiancée, laughing.

"You're a true woman," he said, "and I adore you. When you thought I was a *bona fide* thief, and had taken what did n't belong to me, you trusted me absolutely. But when it's a question of my having given something to another woman, you have your doubts about me."

"Well"—Helena lowered her eyes—"how could I know?" A pause and then: "Did n't you really give it to her?"

Walton slipped from his hand a circle of gold and fitted it over Helena's fourth finger.

"There!" he said, drawing her to his arms. "My little wife!"

"We're not married yet," she smiled, blushing.

"Let's be, though, as soon as I can get a minister. What do you say?"



## WHAT HE WAS

*By Frederick Moxon*

THREE students of Philosophy sat on top of a high hill. One was a Pessimist, one an Optimist, and the third had not declared himself.

While the first two were warmly discussing their opposing theories of life, a sudden gust of wind simultaneously lifted off three hats and sent them bowling down the hill. The Pessimist and the Optimist gave chase, but their companion remained calmly sitting on top of the hill and watched the others running after the hats. Presently each secured his own hat, and the Optimist picked up also that of the third man. Then they panted back up the hill.

"Whew!" gasped the Optimist, as he handed over the hat to him who still sat on top of the hill. "I guess you're an Optimist, too. You did n't seem to worry any."

"Why should I?" was the dispassionate reply. "I knew that 'mine own shall come to me.' You see, I'm a Fatalist."



# THE ECONOMICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE CRUSADE AGAINST TUBERCULOSIS

*By Lawrence F. Flick, M.D.*

THE world-movement to stamp out tuberculosis has been called a crusade, in imitation of a world-movement of a former age, into which religious zeal entered, and upon which civilization looked as a fight for its existence. The plague which it aims to extinguish has been the most prevalent, the most universal, and the most damaging of all diseases.

Since the crusade began, much educational work has been done. Meetings and congresses have been held, and literature has been produced and distributed. Unfortunately, much has been taught which is not true, not from a desire to spread error, but from overzeal to do good. People with a smattering of knowledge have said and done things which in the interest of humanity might better have been left unsaid and undone.

Little thought has been given to the economical administration of the crusade. Everything has met with approval on account of the good object which lies ahead, without inquiry whether the purpose would be accomplished, or whether the work might be done more expeditiously or less expensively in another way.

Such skirmishing warfare, good enough for arousing enthusiasm, is not good enough for a great crusade. Civilization has too much at stake in the fight against tuberculosis to use loose methods when accurate methods are available. Every step should be taken with forethought.

Broadly speaking, in this warfare we have two resources: (1) to cure those who have tuberculosis, and (2) to prevent others from getting it. Underlying the crusade is the well-established fact that the disease is due to a living entity called the tubercle bacillus, without which it cannot arise and which does not propagate itself outside of the body of a human being or an animal, but which may remain alive and capable

of growing and reproducing itself for a long time outside of such a body, in a dark, badly ventilated enclosure.

Subsidiary to this fact are other facts: (1) Every new case of tuberculosis must come from an old case, directly or indirectly. (2) Tuberculosis is not always contagious; it is only contagious when broken down tissue is given off. (3) For implantation, enough living entities must be taken in to overcome the resistance of the individual receiving them. (4) Ordinarily, human beings have a strong resistance, and can withstand implantation for a considerable time under the usual conditions of life. (5) Tuberculosis is a house disease, inasmuch as it is usually implanted in a house; and the house gives the most congenial condition for its development. (6) The house is the natural granary for the preservation of the tubercle bacillus during the time when it is outside of a living body. (7) The accumulation of tuberculous matter in a room or in a workshop gradually makes out of such a place an infected place, or a competent contagious environment, capable of giving the disease to another who inhabits it. (8) Tuberculosis is a long-drawn-out disease, and usually has a terminal period of at least three months. During this period, when it is an open ulcerative case, it is exceedingly contagious, as the victim, being confined to his room and possibly to his bed, makes of that room a competent contagious environment, *unless prevented from doing so by scientific supervision and control*. (9) Every case of tuberculosis has a longer non-contagious period than a contagious period, and is only mildly contagious while the patient is in fair health. (10) Even the most intensely contagious environment may fail to give an implantation.



The cure of tuberculosis has a preventive value in itself and with regard to others only when the afflicted individual is really cured, that is, freed from all living tubercle bacilli, because only then is he secure against ultimately becoming a contagious agent through relapse. Unfortunately, a perfect cure does not often take place when once the ulcerative stage has been reached; not that cure is impossible, but, the disease being local, when the living entity which produces it is thrown out—as it is when the tissue breaks down—it again enters in to grow in another part of the body, either contiguous or some distance away. Consequently, the whole body cannot develop resistance quickly enough and early enough to protect itself against further encroachment, until finally, when resistance has been set up, so much tissue has been destroyed that the person may fall a victim even to micro-organisms which can produce death only when the organs of the body have been already badly damaged.

To obtain a cure of such a case means a long fight, without losing a point. Few people have either the temperament or the financial ability

to follow the treatment carefully enough and long enough for final recovery. The melancholy result is that people who have open ulcerative tuberculosis, the stage in which most cases come under treatment, only recover physically, and remain well only so long as they lead a careful, conservative, prudent, easy life. They relapse sooner or later, and finally pass through the extremely contagious stage to death. The cure of tuberculosis, therefore, has practically only the preventive value which comes from isolation of patients while under treatment.

Of course, it goes without saying that the cure of tuberculosis has a value of its own, outside of prevention, in the saving of those who make complete recoveries. This value should not be underestimated, but it should be placed in a category by itself. It should not be counted as an asset in the movement to stamp out tuberculosis, nor be permitted to mislead us for sentimental reasons into false steps in the crusade.



For the purpose of stamping out tuberculosis, we must place our chief reliance upon keeping those who have not got tuberculosis from getting it. With no new implantations, the disease will become extinct when all existing cases have recovered or finally succumbed. This can be accomplished by scientific supervision and control of every contagious case, for the purpose of preventing it from giving implantation to a new case; but each case must be kept innocuous from the first moment that it is contagious until the very last.

In every case of ulcerative tuberculosis there is a rather long period in which the contagion is intermittent and mild; a somewhat shorter period in which it is continuous and mild; and a still shorter period, usually about three months before death, during which it is intensely contagious. Protection is of value—and therefore important—in proportion to the danger; and the best protection is of no value when there is no danger.

The great danger incident to the last period, when the patient is confined to the house and usually to bed, is due to the fact that he is in an enclosure. "Walking" cases do not often give new implantations. The resistance of human beings is too great. Most people can even resist tubercle bacilli day and night for some time until there has been an accumulation capable of breaking down the resistance. This breaking-down occurs most frequently in those who are caring for an advanced case in the bosom of the family, worn-out with vigils, overworked, oppressed with sorrow, and sometimes emaciated with want; or in those who have taken up quarters which have become contagious environments by reason of the profuse throwing out of tubercle bacilli by former occupants. Ordinarily, one does not contract tuberculosis on the street,

in the street-cars, in church, by casual contact with tuberculous subjects, or by sleeping for a night or two in a room which has been occupied by a consumptive. But during the last few months of life, the tuberculous subject gives off tubercle bacilli in such great profusion that few people can live in the environment thus created without getting an implantation, *unless the tuberculous individual is or has been kept under scientific supervision and control.*

Such supervision *can* make even such a patient harmless, but only when it induces the consumptive to deposit all broken-down tissue in a vessel which can be held close to the mouth, cleanse his lips after each expectoration, hold a paper napkin before his mouth when he coughs, dispose of the utensils and material used for these purposes in a way to contaminate nothing, and immediately change and sterilize bed and body linens when sputum gets on them. And all of these things must be done exactly right, and done always, or else the purpose of the supervision is defeated.

Only the well-to-do can afford such supervision and control, since it has to be kept up for a long time. The efficient poor, that is, the working poor, and the dependent poor, or paupers, can get it only through money contributed by private charity or taken out of public taxes.



There is ample warrant for such supervision and control out of public money, in man's natural right of self-preservation. In civilized communities, this right has been delegated to the government, because if the individual should exercise it, there would be constant turmoil and warfare. Protection against preventable diseases is included in the natural right of self-preservation, and this too has been delegated to the government, since it would lead to disorder if the individual himself attempted to protect himself according to his own ideas.

This protection should be efficient and economical, and it should not interfere with other rights more than is necessary. There are two interests: that of the people who are suffering from tuberculosis, and that of the people who are free from it. Those who have tuberculosis are compelled to undergo privations for the benefit of others, and, since they are already seriously inconvenienced, these privations should not be made greater than is necessary. Those who are free from the disease are entitled to protection, and they have a right to insist upon methods which give that protection, but they should not exact more than is necessary. Besides, the interests and sentiments of the relatives of those who are afflicted should be respected, and no unnecessary harshness be practised in separating them from their afflicted ones.

Let us illustrate what has been said, by a concrete example. There

are in Pennsylvania ten thousand deaths a year from tuberculosis. Nearly two thousand of them are from closed tuberculosis, which is not contagious, and about eight thousand from open, ulcerative tuberculosis, or consumption. For the accomplishment of the purpose of the crusade, it is necessary to bring under scientific supervision and control the eight thousand open ulcerative cases which go down to death every year, and if we wish to do it economically we should begin at that end which is most contagious rather than at the end which is least contagious. Every fatal case, if not supervised and controlled, will almost certainly give rise to a new case; supervision and control will almost certainly prevent a new implantation, and thus save a life and much suffering. Here is something definite—a definite action with a definite result. Supervision and control of earlier cases, those still walking about in fair health, is problematical in its results. It should be done if means are at hand; but it should be done last, not first.

Fully six thousand of the eight thousand open ulcerative cases which go down to death every year in Pennsylvania cannot afford scientific supervision and control in their own homes during the most intensely contagious period, and will have to receive it in hospitals near their homes at public expense, if they are to get it at all. Why near their own homes? Because the poor, whether efficient or inefficient, have the right to be near their loved ones during this last trying tragedy of life, without undergoing the burden of travelling expenses and loss of work as the price of their love; and when this burden is inflicted, it usually defeats the object of the aid extended, inasmuch as at the last moment, when the danger is the greatest, the family takes the stricken one home.



But how could the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania take care of six thousand people for three months a year in hospital beds near the homes of those who are afflicted? In Pennsylvania, it would be quite easy. It so happens that there are in the Commonwealth enough vacant beds located in the right places to take care of the entire six thousand consumptives, and if these were available, all that would be needed in addition would be the maintenance. According to the official report of the Board of Public Charities for 1910, there were in Pennsylvania, during that year, an average of four thousand vacant beds in the hospitals of the commonwealth on every day of the year. Four thousand beds would give hospital treatment to six thousand consumptive patients for eight months a year.

Why are these beds vacant, and why are consumptives not admitted into them? Because there are more hospital-beds in Pennsylvania than are necessary for the diseases which hospitals treat, and because the



managers and medical staffs of general hospitals are ignorant of the fundamental principles underlying the spread of tuberculosis, and are insanely afraid of the disease. To say that tuberculosis cannot be treated in a general hospital without danger to other inmates, or even to admit the possibility of such a thing in the light of our present knowledge of the subject, is a confession of ignorance and incompetency. The layman may be excused, but even he can no longer conscientiously evade the duty of investigating for himself whether or not tuberculosis can be treated in a consumptive ward of a general hospital without danger to others. The hospital stands for a definite idea, and not for a fancy or a whim. To exclude sick people who are in need of help because they have consumption, on so fanciful a ground as that there is danger to other inmates, when science has long since proven that the thing can be done without the slightest danger to any one, can no longer be justified.

What is Pennsylvania doing for dying consumptives? She is isolating about one thousand cases a year, of which about six hundred and fifty are cared for in the Philadelphia General Hospital, about ninety in the Rush Hospital, about fifty in the White Haven Sanatorium, about thirty-five in the Henry Phipps Institute, about twenty in the Chestnut Hill Home for Consumptives, about twenty in the Lucien Moss Home of the Jewish Hospital, and a few in each of the other institutions which treat tuberculosis. The Commonwealth itself took care of forty-three cases during the seven months ending December 31, 1909, according to its latest official report.



Where would the money come from for maintaining six thousand last-stage cases for at least three months during each year? It costs about ten dollars a week to care for such a case. Six thousand cases at ten dollars a week, for at least twelve weeks in the year, would cost \$720,000 a year for maintenance. The Commonwealth itself is at present spending a million dollars a year in the crusade against tuberculosis, and the cities and private corporations are spending about a quarter of a million more. There is enough expended to isolate every last-stage case for even more than three months, and do all that it is necessary to do for the walking cases.

Unfortunately, in most of the work done in Pennsylvania, the logical order of things has been reversed. Of public money used, that used by the city of Philadelphia alone is used to the best advantage for the prevention of tuberculosis. The State spends nearly all its money on walking cases in dispensaries and sanatoria.

Dispensaries and sanatoria are necessary in the crusade against tuberculosis, but they should constitute the lesser part of the machinery and

not the greater. They are chiefly of value for educational purposes and as distributing centres. They looked much better in theory at the beginning of the crusade than they have turned out to be in practice. Experience has brought out their weak points, and it is now generally recognized that they have little preventive value. Even the education and training which can be given in them is evanescent. It does not endure long after the patient quits the dispensary or returns home from the sanatorium. When the patient succumbs, he generally implants a new case during the final period of his disease. What has been expended upon him has been mostly lost from the point of view of prevention of the disease.

Dispensaries have their greatest value as clearing-houses, so to speak, for hospitals and sanatoria. In an economical administration of the crusade, they should be used for this purpose only. Free distribution of milk and eggs should be kept at the minimum. It does very little good for prevention, and it does some harm to the social welfare of the community. Preventive-measure supplies, such as sputum-cups, paper napkins, and paper bags, on the contrary, should be distributed freely.



Sanatoria have their chief value in the treatment of tuberculosis. They should not be maintained entirely at public expense. Tuberculous subjects who can contribute something towards recovery, either out of their savings or out of the savings of friends and relatives, may possibly remain well after leaving the sanatorium, because, not having lost their places in the social fabric, they can take up their work where they left it off. Those who cannot contribute something, either out of their own savings or out of the savings of relatives and friends, are doomed, unless pensioned after leaving the sanatorium. This is a hard fact, but it may as well be recognized.

To get well from tuberculosis takes years, and patients generally remain in the sanatoria only long enough to recover physical well-being, and then go home to try to earn a living. If they have an occupation in which they can immediately begin to earn enough to maintain themselves comfortably without undue fatigue, they may remain in physical health, and, as time goes on, even fully recover; but if they have no occupation to go to at once, or if the occupation which they have is too fatiguing and does not return them enough to maintain nutrition at the high standard which was given them in the sanatorium, want and hardship will bring on a relapse in a very short time. Even among the well-to-do, sanatorium treatment often fails of its ultimate purpose because patients cannot be kept under treatment long enough for complete recovery.

The inefficient poor with tuberculosis cannot be saved in sanatoria. They have been run over by the Juggernaut of human greed, and their injuries are too great to be helped by such mild surgery. If society really wants to save them, it will have to go much further than treating them in sanatoria—it will have to colonize them in health resorts, after they have been treated, where it will provide them with opportunities for open-air occupation at farming or forestry, or at light occupations in sanitary workshops; it will have to supervise and control their mode of life; and it will have to make good the deficit which will accrue in their maintenance above what they can earn. Manifestly, this is not now practicable. The alternative is to abandon the sanatorium treatment for them altogether, and to admit them into hospitals when they have become a menace to those in their environments. In this way, their relatives and friends at least can be saved.

For the purpose of further illustrating what has been said and emphasizing the most important points in an economical administration of the crusade against tuberculosis, let us take a somewhat wider field than Pennsylvania. In the United States there are about seventy thousand deaths a year from open ulcerative tuberculosis. To isolate for three months before death the seventy thousand people who die would cost at the rate of one hundred and twenty dollars each, or about \$8,410,000 a year. The isolation of these seventy thousand people for three months would almost certainly prevent seventy thousand new implantations. Whatever might be spent upon the seventy thousand cases prior to the terminal, intensely contagious stage of their disease would in itself mean very little for the prevention of tuberculosis. According to published compilations of money spent in the crusade against tuberculosis, about fifteen million dollars was expended in the United States in the year 1911. With this amount all of the last-stage cases could have been cared for in the final three months, and there would have been over six million dollars left for other work. What will be the net results of the fifteen million dollars expended in prevention cannot be determined at present, but we have reason to think that it will not be very great. Most of the money was spent on walking cases, which are not very contagious, and through which new implantations probably seldom take place.

It has been estimated by some that it will cost one hundred million dollars a year to carry on the crusade against tuberculosis in the United States. This is undoubtedly a high estimate, and yet it is probably not too high if the work is to be done along the lines which have been followed. By devoting our resources first to the isolation of all last-stage

cases, and then with what money is left over doing what we can for the walking cases, I believe that the entire crusade might be successfully carried out at an outlay not exceeding one hundred and fifty million dollars all told.

On an average, about ten years elapse between the implantation of tuberculosis and its termination in death. If all the last-stage cases were isolated every year for the next ten years, very few new implantations would take place during that time, and the disease would be practically exterminated at the end of the ten years. The cost of maintenance for the ten years would be less than one hundred million dollars, and possibly less than fifty million dollars, inasmuch as the number to be cared for would grow less every year. The cost of equipment, if all existing hospital beds which are now empty were used, would be relatively small; but even if present hospital beds could not be procured for any patients, and beds would have to be provided for, all the outlay would not exceed seventy million dollars for this purpose. Fifty million dollars ought to provide all the beds necessary to care for every last-stage consumptive who cannot be scientifically cared for in his own home. A total outlay of one hundred and fifty million dollars over a period of ten years, if done on the lines laid down by science and common sense, would in my opinion wipe out tuberculosis in the United States. If the crusade is conducted on the lines now generally followed, it will cost billions of dollars and will take decades.



It behooves all thoughtful men to do what they can to direct this crusade in practical, sane ways, and keep it out of sentimental and political byways. Caring for walking cases is so much more attractive than caring for last-stage cases—it appeals so much more to sentiment and vanity—that it is difficult to get either public officials or private philanthropists to do what should be done for the latter cases. This is as one would expect, however; for a dead man has no influence, and the average person cannot grasp the abstract idea of good which comes to society at large from the prevention of tuberculosis in those whose identity is unknown and unknowable. Well people cannot feel gratitude for not having become sick; they cannot even know the benefactor who by wise legislation or generous bounty has kept them from getting sick. They will place no laurels on the brows of their benefactors, nor will they help them along in their careers. For the true crusader, there can be no reward except that which comes with a sense of duty well done.



# THE CHAIN SUCCESSION

*By Stanley Olmsted*

**I**F at the morning hour of 10:45 a tap should sound upon your door; and if the door in question should happen to be of the fourth-floor chamber, windowless but skylighted, in some lodging-house down a side street from the Times Tower; and if the thing is additionally clenched by arrears for your rent—then you might as well surrender. Ten-forty-five A.M. is the actor's witching hour. Commensurately with his luck, or his lack of it, he may roll on his side into yet sweeter Elysiums, or vainly try to, against the bombardment of a carpet sweeper. And sometimes it is even more definite than all that. . . .

"It's me—it's Mrs. Russ!" came the voice of Mr. Everett Melbourne's landlady. "The help left yesterday, and I'm doin' the rooms myself. Would you please get up? I want to get it over."

Perhaps an hour later, Mr. Everett Melbourne had partaken of his combined breakfast and luncheon at a café on Eighth Avenue, and was looking in on Mrs. Russ in her private apartment, which was antipodal to his own, being on the basement floor, underground. He asked her how she was "comin'," since the resignation of Cathy, colored maid-of-all-work.

Mrs. Russ gave a deprecating shrug. "Don't look at me," she said (which, being exactly what she never failed to say, might safely be overlooked). "I'm that dirty and untidy! I was just sayin' this mornin': when you work you clean forget what it is to feel clean!" She drew the folds of her kimona together, as if to hide herself.

She did herself not quite unconscious injustice. Her thin face, with very clear outlines of chin and cheek-bones, was already neatly touched in with powder and rouge. Her purplish hair was massed over a rat, in a very large pompadour, and drawn girlishly in a low coil on the neck. One recognized her instantly as the slightly faded original of innumerable photographs adorning her walls, her mantel, and her dresser; photographs to be classed as "stunning" by Professional opinion, and belonging to that period of taste when the Christy-girl was at her zenith.

As a matter of fact, Mrs. Russ was in her most faultless get-up



of visage. Her familiar embarrassment referred merely to the kimona, worn always for housework. This kimona meant well. It was of cream-colored satin, with large and very non-Japanese red flowers, and called aloud for gasoline cleaning. Also, like most of its family, it bore its name by courtesy. No Japanese maiden would have recognized it.

Decency demanded the offer of a seat to Mr. Melbourne. He chose the rocker. Mrs. Russ perched herself on the piano stool, the while she clung vaguely to her dusting rag.

"Any news?" she inquired.

Her tone was polite, yet oddly personal. There was a quality she could get into her manner more effective than any written bill ever presented.

"Good news," reassured the lodger. "In fact, I don't mind telling *you*, Mrs. Russ—excellent news! At last we have arranged with the Circuit and are to have our try-out in Hoboken next week. The try-out may cost us a little something, of course. But if it's a go—and it's perfectly sure to be a go—we'll soak it to the Circuit. There's the great advantage that I wrote the sketch myself. We don't have to pay no royalties to nobody."

Mrs. Russ lacked enthusiasm.

"By the way," supplemented Mr. Melbourne, "I never told you the plot, did I? You see, it's three people—two men, one woman. The woman we've got does n't suit us particularly. She's over-emotional, and she's flat and hard as a Bent's cracker and has always got a cold. Moreover, she has a hook nose. What we need is a *looker*! I say"—the idea struck him suddenly—"you don't want to go back on the stage, do you?"

The landlady was twirling the duster. "No more for muh! I've had all that's comin' to me of the stage. This thing of keeping roomers may not be so excitin', but it's a cinch on gettin' tied up in North Dakota in a blizzard, with no trunk and ten cents. No, sir-ee! When I swore off, I *swore off*."

Mr. Melbourne was musing thoughtfully. "Because," he ruminated, "if you cared to join us for a while, you'd be running your own first-class hotel in no time, I feel sure. . . . By the way, Mrs. Russ, that skylight which ventilates and makes habitable my room is leakin'. The large drops fell directly on my nose in the storm last night, thereby disturbing my slumbers considerable."

He moved to go. Mrs. Russ warmed up ever so slightly, being indeed slightly weakened through the leaky skylight. She reminded Mr. Melbourne that he had not yet told her of the plot. "What does the woman have to do?" she asked him.

"Oh, she has to look lovely as a dream and do very little. You

would suit ideally"—Mr. Melbourne appeared to be thinking out loud. "You see, it's this way: First the other fellow comes in whistlin' to his dog—like this——"

From now on, Mr. Melbourne acted out his sketch, line for line. He took everybody's part.

"And so," he concluded, "there's a little music, light and soft, and she's looking into his eyes, and he's holding her hand, and by comes the old sport again, still whistlin' for his poodle. And she says: 'Dear me! Will that man *never* find his dog?' and the curtain falls. It gives her the curtain laugh, you see."

A twinge of unacknowledged temptation moved Mrs. Russ to change the subject. She must hurry and finish her dusting, she said, as she had to dress and go down-town. Mr. Melbourne took the hint. He sauntered from the premises with that debonair ease which was perhaps his strongest asset.

On the following day he had yet more news. He had found a backer, one Tom Ledson, automobile agent, who was interested in putting a wedge into theatricals! Tom had agreed to advance the small amount necessary to expenses for trial performances in Hoboken, in return for which he wished to be the business representative of the sketch. But Tom was autocratically demanding a new lady in the trio, and at once.

Now, they had already deposed the old one—she with the flat chest and the beak nose, beside whom Mrs. Russ was assured she was a beauty incarnate. Or, at least, if they had n't quite deposed her, they meant to. Would Mrs. Russ, then, submit to an introduction to Tom—Mr. Melbourne begged her pardon!—to Mr. Thomas J. Ledson, automobile agent and gentleman of distinction and ability, not to say cold cash?

Mr. Thomas J. Ledson, as it appeared, awaited the issue on the sidewalk outside, even as they talked. With Mrs. Russ's consent, he was brought in for presentation. He proved a stocky gentleman of few words. He looked Mrs. Russ over.

"Might be younger," he said. "Guess make up all right, though. From front, anyhow."

"But I assure you I don't care to go," protested Mrs. Russ.

"She's merely talking," explained Mr. Melbourne. "She'll stand by us—the Hoboken try-out anyhow—why, sure!"

"She must understand—there'll be no guarantee," observed Mr. Ledson.

"But I have this house on my hands," deplored Mrs. Russ.

"Find a deputy—just for that week. Get that woman in your third-floor front. Ain't she talked of going partners on the house, anyhow?" Melbourne knew the topography.

"She won't do it, I'm sure," protested Mrs. Russ. "I simply can't—I'll be upset something awful!"

"Oh, forget it," advised Mr. Melbourne.

And thus and more, accounts to the contrary notwithstanding, the lure of the stage is permanently strong, once its virus has been well inoculated. Assuring them she would ne'er consent, Mrs. Russ was yet finally induced to accept the "sides" for the lady role of the sketch; the role which required the looker.

For purposes of rehearsal, the commodious ballroom of Kolb's Hall had been secured. At this locality Mrs. Russ therefore presented herself promptly at 11:30 on the following morning. Wilting flags of unrecognizable calibre drooped from lonely rafters. Peanut shells, wrapping papers, and petals of artificial flowers littered the floor. There had been a dance the night before, and the place had not yet been swept.

"I must be early," surmised Mrs. Russ. "Nobody ain't thought of comin' but me." She reasoned, with some acumen, that Mr. Melbourne was doubtless still in bed. Moved by decent professional politeness, she had, this morning, left him to his own conscience. She regretted her delicacy.

But she was not alone. Her eye swept the hall to make the discovery. In a far and shadowy corner was another woman. And this woman was cloaked and veiled, and sat very quietly and patiently. Whoever she might be, she appeared to belong there.

Mrs. Russ felt she must determine the facts in the case. Casually she made the distance between herself and the intruder, her trailing skirts swishing as she walked. Mrs. Russ was at her best when her skirts trailed most.

"Beautiful weather," she said.

The silent, veiled figure nodded.

"Rather smelly in here, though."

No response for this.

"They don't ventilate these halls enough." Mrs. Russ carefully selected a chair, dusted it off with her muff, and elevated her nostrils. "It really reminds one of a menagerie, don't it?"

By way of reply, there was another and a well-nigh imperceptible bend of the head. Mrs. Russ realized she need have no further doubt. The thing was plain. This was the other woman: the over-emotional lady who had been dropped from the sketch, whose place Mrs. Russ was usurping. And she was palpably sore. Without doubt, she had returned to make a scene.

A black cloak, long and rusty, hid her figure. There were but impressionistic hints of hook nose, through thicknesses of veiling.

But Mrs. Russ was given to rapid and accurate estimates. Something in the woman's lines, as she sat there, draped, spare, and obtrusive, was an unerring indication of her status.

Mrs. Russ summarized it mentally: "She may be a down-and-outer now. She may be no good even for a one-horse vaudeville act like this. But you can't fool me. That pose has come in handy for a dozen parts, from 'East Lynne' to 'Camille.' She's been a stock-company leadin'-lady in her day, or I've never lodged ham-fatters! Pore old thing! This stage life's a bad business."

Yet it was difficult to evolve conversation. Mrs. Russ cast about for a new opening, and decided on the veiled lady's reticule: a rather marvellous affair, of gleaming silvery scales lapping one over another. Mrs. Russ had recognized it as one of a large number offered at a recent bargain sale for ninety-eight cents apiece.

"Why, what a lovely hand-bag you carry!" she exclaimed. "Do excuse me—but where *could* I get one like it?"

"It was inexpensive," replied a hoarse contralto—the regulation stock-company leading-lady voice and no mistaking. "I'm afraid there are none left."

There may have been enough of frigid languor in this reply to account for the fit of coughing that ensued. The woman threw open her cloak at the chest, as if for more breathing space. Mrs. Russ perceived the flatness to which Mr. Melbourne had referred in his delineation of yesterday. It looked like a tubercular flatness to the usurper. Her conscience rumbled. Her sympathies stirred and wandered out, gropingly.

"Why, what a cold you've let yourself get!" she cried. "Here—try my smellin'-salts. Smellin'-salts clears out the head something wonderful, you know. But you really ought to tuck yourself away in bed—with any such cold as that."

"It's nothing," said the other. "I'm quite used to it long ago! I have never let it interfere with my work."

The tendency was now toward thawing. Mrs. Russ perceived it. "Ah, yes," she encouraged. "A little energy, when you really ain't got none, does wonders sometimes."

"And, besides," further melted the deposed incumbent, "it was particularly important that I come out this morning."

"Rehearsin' something?"—Mrs. Russ deemed it the psychological moment.

"For five weeks past, yes. I agreed to play a part in a vaudeville sketch. We were to go out in ten days. I had never done any vaudeville before, but—the season being so terrible——"

"I understand," sympathized Mrs. Russ. "We all come to it sooner or later."

The crust had been broken. The other woman was now fairly launched. Confidences flowed. An occasional fit of coughing was no interruption.

"But now," the deposed one went on, "it looks as though even that would fall through. We must have rehearsed at least twenty versions of his playlet—Mr. Melbourne's, I mean. He had never written one before, and we were so anxious to have it a sure success. And now, after our work, a letter reaches me this morning with the news that he has lost courage—that he thinks he must abandon the idea. I cannot let him do that. I have written him to meet me here and see if we couldn't do something. Think of it! All those weeks lost—and at mid-season—and prices for lodging ever higher, and the kind of woman who rents rooms to you—oh, you know the kind! Without breeding, without pity——"

Mrs. Russ lifted her eyes heavenward. "I know the kind, yes. Landladies in New York!"

The former incumbent jabbed her handkerchief suspiciously beneath her veiling. "Enough of my troubles," she said. "Mr. Melbourne ought to have gotten here long ago. I feel sure he'll be able to fix it up, somehow. He really must! He must! . . . You're with that new musical comedy, no doubt. But aren't you a little early? *They* don't usually get down to their rehearsals here until one."

Mrs. Russ hesitated. "The fact is," she began, "I'm not, strictly speakin', in the profession at all—though I did once give a good imitation of being in one show. That was twelve years ago. The show was named 'Winnie, the Pore Chorus Girl; or, Innocence Before the World.' I played *Winnie*—and I must say it was a great cinch for a young thing like I was then. All the hard actin', you see, was in the part of *Rhodora*, the wicked Prima Donna; and they had a cracker-jack woman, a real actress, in fact, with the nastiest disposition I ever saw, hired to play her, for seventy-five a week. That made me pretty sore; but I got all the applause even if my salary was thirty-five less, and even if I did get my lines crooked. That other woman was just paid to get hissed!"

The veiled person had listened as one who struggles toward some decision.

"Adèle Lydair," she said at last, "we might as well forget old grudges. I recognized you the moment you came in. Don't you know me—child?"

The thick mask was lifted. The tense aquiline contours were as a gimlet boring into the Tenderloin landlady's bitterest reminiscences of her ingénue past. "Etelka Larrange!" she gasped. "You—of all people! I thought you was dead!"

It was a moment too deep for foolish sham. Both of them had



lived. Both of them had been both softened and hardened by the impact of pitiless, pitying years. They clasped hands like two brothers.

"We lost each other," ruminated Mrs. Russ, "in that North Dakota blizzard. Where in the world have you been hiding since?"

"For many years I headed a stock company in Ledville, Missouri, every summer; winters I was out on the road. My name is now Violet Harmon." The former rival sighed. "I had to take something more youthful, you see, as I grew older."

"And mine's Mrs. Russ," supplemented Adèle. "I had to take a husband or I'd never got back to Broadway from North Dakota."

"I've had three of them," recalled the other sadly. "The last one was all right, and I went into retirement. But he died, three years ago."

"I've only had one," said Adèle. "But I divorced him eight years back. Wasn't it an awful blizzard!"

"Wasn't it!"

At the very remembrance the older woman had another fit of coughing. The younger withdrew her rich fur cape and threw it about her shoulders.

"Miss Larrange," she said almost tenderly, "we didn't get along well them days, but I always did admire you, and look up to you, even if I envied you. You had something I never could have, you see. You had emotional genius, and nobody knew that better than me. Somehow, I'd like to make up now for the hard things I used to feel then. Come and live with me! From what you've said, I'm so afraid you're not comfortable; I'm so afraid, maybe you ain't as prosperous as a woman of your great gifts ought to be."

Very positively this was more than *Rhodora*, the Wicked Prima Donna of yore, had expected. For the staunching of tears she would fain have hidden, she must resort openly to the borrowed fur cape, into which she bowed her head. Innocence-Before-the-World (of days ago) or *Winnie*, the Poor Chorus Girl, would have done the same but for the fact that her new-discovered friend now struggled with the worst seizure she had yet had during their conversation. Mrs. Russ therefore gave herself over to the more practical business of applied smelling-salts, and accompanying blows on the back.

"With that letter," admitted the elder woman, when her breath returned—"with Mr. Melbourne's letter calling off the sketch, this morning, came a notice from my landlady that I must leave to-day. There is absolutely no shelter left in the world to which I feel I have any right to turn. The world has no use for us—once it is through with us—"

"Never mind, never mind, dearie," reasoned Mrs. Russ, with red-rimmed eyes. "Come and live with me. You can have my back

parlor. It's comfortable. I could get eight a week for it if I chose to rent it. But I'd rather keep it for myself—with you in it. You can pay me back teachin' me how to act. Do you know, since them days when I discovered I could n't, I've always longed to know how to act, even if I did n't never let on. You can teach me how to use my voice, you can teach me how to talk nice and grammatical—if it ain't too late—and when you feel just like it, and maybe I want to take a little trip away somewhere, you can kind of look out for the house and for me, in my absence. You see, we can sort of go partners on it. We can——”

At exactly this point Mrs. Russ glanced up, quite by accident, from the sobbing woman she comforted. Gazing stolidly in upon her from the doorway, she beheld Mr. Thomas J. Ledson, automobile agent of few words, managerial aspirations, and cold cash. By his side, with proprietary confidence, stood a florid and pot-hatted young lady of the type uncompromisingly ingénue. Mrs. Russ recognized her as a professional soubrette occupying a third-floor front in the house opposite her own. She furthermore divined her as hypothetically but undoubtedly a personal selection of Mr. Ledson, for a solitary female role in a sketch by Mr. Melbourne which required a looker. An instant later and Mr. Everett Melbourne himself had joined the two. Appropriately his appearance was of just one instant's duration. Mrs. Russ saw him glance in. She saw his startled tug at his soubrette's elbow. She saw his terrified pull at his backer's coat-tail. Then the three of them vanished in limbo of outer darkness; silently, as they had come.

Mrs. Russ drew her first free breath, perceiving that her companion had seen nothing. “Short-change artists!” she murmured to herself. “Muckers, maggots, and parasites! Let 'em keep their cold-feet, and keep off!”

She turned to her friend. “I was waitin' here to see a plumber, you understand,” she said. “I wanted him to fix a skylight that leaks at the top of my house. But I don't believe he's comin' this late—and you've got your movin' to do, and there's one or two dishonest and good-for-nothing roomers as have n't paid me in weeks and I've simply got to eject. Let's get busy, then. Let's beat it.”



## THE SMALLER VOICE

BY RICHARD KIRK

WHEN March winds blustered, I believed  
The Snow-drop's truer prophecy;  
And lo, to-day the world's in flower for me!

# PASETSK THE SECOND-HANDER

*By Mary Imlay Taylor*

PASETSK, the Russian Jew, kept the little second-hand shop below Olive Street. He stood at his door, peering out, with the absorbed air of one who dwells apart, except in the matter of a bargain. In that, his neighbors on Grand Avenue admitted his superiority.

"Pasetsk," they said, in their broken English, "Pasetsk, he ees a hard one, he would skin an eel."

Pasetsk had skinned many eels in his lifetime. There were three gold balls over his door, and many strange things in his show-cases, besides the stuffed lizard that hung suspended on a wire, and fascinated all the little Italians in the neighborhood.

Pasetsk himself, brown and wrinkled, might well have been strung on a wire like the lizard. Instead, he peered down the busy, smoky street. There were many passers-by, and a babel of strange tongues, but still Pasetsk was disappointed. He went back and dusted his cases, he dusted the landscape done in worsted-work, the lizard, and, at last, an old clock made in Novgorod.

"Thou dost well, my little pigeon," he said to it, in Russ. "Thou hast lost but two minutes. But she is late," he added thoughtfully, "that little girl is late, and it is cold."

Twice a day for three weeks Pasetsk had watched in vain for one little Russian girl. He did not know her name, but, like the second-hander himself, she was a stranger in this strange land of America, and she had always spoken to him as she passed. Then he had missed her, but that morning she had reappeared on her way to the shop, where she worked as a little check-girl.

At noon, therefore, Pasetsk watched for her again. The biting wind struck in his face as he opened the door, but he looked out anxiously. This time his eyes brightened as a child's figure emerged from the crowd.

"You are vaire late this noon," said Pasetsk gently, in his difficult English. "Id ees cold."

The girl, a slim child in her teens, turned a pale face toward him. "Id ees vaire cold on the rivaire," she answered, and, for the first time, she came timidly into the shop, a little ghost of herself, her beautiful thick braids cut off close to her head.

"You haf been seeek?" Pasetsk said gently.

"I haf had the fevaire," she replied, "and my mothaire, she ees blind."

The second-hander leaned his elbows on the show-case. "Did she take care of you, when she ees blind?" he asked hoarsely.

"I was ad the hospital," said the child. "The woman in the cellar of the house where we live, she care for my mothaire. I"—she drew out her handkerchief and began to untie the knots in it—"I haf got to sell this ring."

He took it, his eyes on the child. "What does your mothaire, then, for her living?" he asked.

"She makes loffy baskets. They sell so well until I am seeek. While I am seeek my mothaire could nod sell. The people, they feared the fevaire was in the baskets. Id ees so thad we haf now no money ad all."

Pasetsk opened his hand and looked at the ring. It was an old Russian ring, and the pawnbroker stood staring at it. In the silence the Novgorod clock struck the hour. The child shivered, holding out her thin hands to the stove.

"Where dost thou get thy ring?" Pasetsk asked her, in Russ.

"Id ees mine," she replied, understanding, but speaking her English.

"My mothaire hung id round my neck when I was a baby."

The Jew's hand closed over the ring; he stood looking at her strangely.

"Will you buy id?" she asked timidly.

He roused himself and went back to the counter for his little scales. Mechanically he weighed it, touching the scales with his pencil. The child watched eagerly; she loved the ring, and there was a lump in her throat.

"Id ees heavy," said Pasetsk. "I will pay three dollars for this ring."

Her delicate mouth trembled. She must let the ring go, for that was almost a week's wages.

The second-hander counted out three soiled dollar-bills, then he put on his coat. "I would lig to buy a basket," he said. "Will you take me to your mothaire?"

Her face brightened. "She will lig to sell a basket," she replied eagerly.

They walked along the street together. In many doorways sat maternal Latins, with their arms full of dark-eyed bambini. Lithuanians and Greeks and Sicilians played together in the snow.

It was a long way.

They ascended the hill and descended to the river-bank. The house stood with its feet in the water; ice hung from the tide level on its rough foundation. The little girl ascended the outside staircase and opened a door. Pasetsk followed, stooping his head to enter. It was dark to his

dazzled eyes, but he heard a woman singing, and he stopped to listen. She was singing a song of that far country that had cast out her people and his; for Semilétka Vronsky was a Russian Jewess.

Pasetsk silenced the child with a gesture. In this strange land the woman was singing in Russ:

"If the frost nipped the flowerets no more,  
If in winter the flowerets would bloom,  
If the woes of my spirit were o'er,  
My spirit would cast off its gloom,—  
I would sit with my sorrow no longer  
O'erwatching the dew-covered field."

Silently Pasetsk followed the little girl into the garret. The blind woman sat there, weaving a basket. As her deft, thin fingers worked she sang again:

"I would sit with my sorrow no longer!"

Her head was bowed over her work, but they saw her pale, delicate profile.

"Mothaire," said the child, "here ees the nize gentleman to buy a basket."

The blind woman turned her face toward them, trying to see. "Whad didst thou say, Alenka?" she asked, her hands falling helplessly in her lap.

"I would buy a basket," said Pasetsk gently.

Semilétka drew a sharp breath. "I cannod see," she said softly. "I did nod know any one was here. This basket, id ees fifty cents."

Pasetsk took it up, pretending to look at it, but he saw the child go to her mother and stroke her thin hand.

"I will buy the basket," he said.

"I will finish id," replied the woman, stretching out her hand for it.

As Pasetsk gave it back, their fingers touched. She started, shivering, and raised her hand, with an involuntary gesture, shading her eyes.

"How long haf you been blind?" asked the Jew.

"Id ees three year," she answered, bending her head to listen to his voice. "I was vaire seeck, an' when I get up from the fevaire I cannod see."

Pasetsk drew nearer. "Turn your face to the window," he commanded. "In thad far land I was once a doctaire to the eye."

She lifted her face obediently, and he took her chin in his hand and turned it upward, looking at her long and attentively.

"Do you nod see thad?" he asked, passing his hand swiftly across her eyes.



She winced. "Yaes, I see thad. I see lately the red horseman come up ad the dawn," she added plaintively, using the quaint Russian simile for the sun.

"Id ees well," said Pasetsk gravely. "I can cure this eye. I will go for a bandage."

He paid for the basket and went. Alenka danced, closing the door.

"Mothaire," she cried, "we haf ofer three dollars, we ees again vaire rich. This nize gentleman always spoke to me when I pass, id ees he who cometh here."

Semilétka was trembling. "Whad does he look lig, Alenka?" she asked.

"He ees old, one thousand year old," the child laughed. "He ees brown, he ees leedle."

Semilétka laughed a little, reassured. "Eef I could bud see," she murmured, and took up her straw braid.

"He ees come back now with a good eye for thee!" cried Alenka, looking down the stairs.

Her mother stopped work again and listened to his step.

"I theenk id ees nod he," she murmured to herself.

Pasetsk had been to the chemist's and returned with a roll of bandage.

"You will turn your face to me," he said quietly.

He was skilful; swiftly and perfectly he doctored and bandaged the eyes, Alenka watching him in awe. As he finished, he rolled up what was left of the bandage.

"I will come again," he said. "Thad eye will be bettaire. Maybe both will yet see."

Semilétka half rose, her lips quivering. "We cannod pay for the doctaire for my eye," she said softly, "you know thad?"

"I know," replied the second-hander. "Where ees now your husband?"

She shrank back to her seat. "He ees dead," she said. "He ees dead twelve year."

Pasetsk's keen eyes searched her. "Id ees a long time," he remarked, as he went to the door.

Alenka ran after him. "You haf forgot your basket."

He took it without a word, and went out.

"Alenka," said her mother, "he ees vaire old, you say?"

"A thousand year," said the child. "There ees a lizard in his shop, he look lig thad lizard."

"Id ees nod he," Semilétka said to herself; "id ees nod he who can look lig thad in thirteen year;" and she began to weave again.

"We will eat!" Alenka cried gleefully. "Here we had bud this *chelpen*, and now I will haf some gruel and some milk!" She danced, nibbling the *chelpen*, a Russian cake of hard dough.

"Id ees the fevaire thad make you so hungry," Semilétka said, sighing as Alenka went out.

The child returned, presently, with some bread and a penny's worth of milk. She sang, heating the milk over the fire.

" Little Cock, little Cock,  
*Pietushók, pietushók,*  
 With the buttered crest,  
*Zalatoi grebeshók,*  
 With the buttered head,  
*Máshannaja galovka,*  
 With the forehead of curdled milk,  
*Smiatanij lobók!*  
 Show yourself at the window  
*Vighiani voshko;*  
 I will give you some gruel  
*Dam tibie kashki,*  
 In a red spoon.  
*Na Krasnoi loszkie."*

The milk began to smoke in the tin cup, and the child took it, holding it up to the blind woman's lips.

"Leedle pigeon," she cooed, "here ees some milk."

Semilétka drank; she could not see how little the child had. Tomorrow was rent day, and Alenka remembered it.

Pasetsk, the second-hander, went back to his shop.

"Her husband is dead twelve years," he said to himself bitterly. "Where, then, is thad bad man?"

His face darkened with fury, his clenched hands twitched on his knees, as he huddled over his stove. The wind outside whistled, he did not hear Alenka's childish voice singing to the little cock.

"In Moscow this night, thirteen years ago, I could have killed him," he said. "If I will, I can make her blind. It is right that I punish her!"

In the morning he went out again and bandaged Semilétka's eyes. Twice a week for three weeks the devil in the man fought for his soul, and twice a week he went, patient, silent, strangely grim. Alenka was back at her work again, and Semilétka made many baskets. Hope kindled. The third week he found the little girl home for a half-holiday, and she watched him while he bathed her mother's eyes. When he went out into the hall, Alenka followed him.

"Will she see again with one eye," she asked timidly, "lig she did?"

He nodded. "She will see," he said bluntly.

Alenka, with a pretty, childish gesture, lifted his hand to her lips. "Little father!" she said, in Russ.

Pasetsk dragged his hand away and went down the long stair in blind haste; in the street he covered his face with his hands. The child thought she had made him angry; she ran to her mother and hid her face in her lap.

"I haf made the nize gentleman haf a mad," she said, weeping. "He will nod gif back your eye now!"

"Id ees nod any man who will gif back my eye," said Semilétka simply; "id ees God."

But Alenka hid when the Jew came again, and the blind woman was alone. Pasetsk did not look at her eyes.

"In a week," he said, "you will see with both eyes. Now you will see with the one."

She clasped her hands. "You are a good man!" she murmured.

"Where ees your husband?" he demanded abruptly.

Semilétka shuddered. "You are a good man," she replied softly. "I am nod scairt to tell you. I am afraid thad my husband find me. Thirteen years ago I ran away from him, I ran away with a man who tells me thad he lofe me with a grad lofe."

"And your husband?" said Pasetsk. "Did he nod lofe you?"

"He was a mos' good man," replied Semilétka sadly, "now I know thad, but I theenk then he did nod lofe me." Her voice trailed; she looked pitifully worn and aged for her years. "Thad bad man, he tell me how much he lofe me. I was young, I was wicked, I went with him, and I took Alenka. I could nod leave Alenka! Id was thad thad parted us. He would nod let me keep Alenka, my husband's child. He brought us ovaire the grad sea—and then he left us."

Pasetsk rose and walked to and fro in the attic. "How long," he said—"how long ees id since he left you?"

"Twelve year," replied Semilétka, "twelve year haf I worked for the leedle pigeon. I was in a grad beeg wash-house, then I was seeck, and when I am well I cannod see. Then Alenka, she work. Alenka ees a good child, she ees nod lig me, for I"—Semilétka clasped her thin hands on her breast—"I was bad to go with a bad man. God has punished me for my sin."

"Yaes," said Pasetsk sternly; "you were bad. Bud your husband—how ees id with him?"

Semilétka's head sank lower. "I do nod know. I am afraid thad some time he come and take Alenka. God, He will forgif me, bud my husband, he will nod forgif me."

Pasetsk came and stood beside her.

"Semilétka," he said, for the first time speaking in Russ, "I am from Moscow, I came here from there, in that great trouble with the Jews. It was my home, but now I dwell in a strange land, a land where they eat swine and the flesh of young pigs. In Moscow once I had a wife.

She was young and she was beautiful, and there was a girl child born to us. I loved her—I am a silent man, but I loved her. When the child was a year old the wife left me. She took my child, the daughter of my heart, to the bosom of a strange man, a man who stole his friend's wife. I am alone."

At the sound of his voice, speaking in a familiar tongue, Semilétka had half risen, and as he finished speaking she fell on her knees at his feet.

"Laurinius," she moaned, "my husband, is it thou?"

Pasetsk stooped and took the bandage from her eyes. She saw through a mist, yet she knew him.

"Behold me!" he said bitterly. "I am thy work, Semilétka!"

She sank lower, her hands clasping his feet. "The child!" she sobbed, in agony.

"I swore that I would kill that man," said Pasetsk. "I swore that I would kill thee. An adulteress should be stoned!"

Semilétka shuddered at his feet.

"Kill me," she wept, "kill me, if thou wilt, my husband, but take not the child from me."

He stood looking down at her. For thirteen years he had waited to be avenged; now she lay at his feet. He stretched out his thin hands over the woman's bowed head with a poignant gesture. Through the little attic window the sun of this strange land touched the hem of their garments.

The door opened and Alenka stood there. She gave a little cry at the sight of her mother on the floor. Pasetsk's heart yearned.

"Alenka," he said, "I am thy father."

The child, stunned, looked from one to the other. "Mothaire," she cried, "ees id true?"

"Id ees true," Semilétka said, in a low voice. "In thees strange land God hath nod forgot thee, leedle pigeon, God hath given to thee thy fathaire. Thy fathaire, who ees a good man. As for me, thy mothaire, I am a vaire wicked woman. I——"

"Semilétka!" said Pasetsk.

She lifted her tear-drenched, shamed eyes to his face. It was no longer old and worn and brown, the face of the Jewish second-hander; there was a glory and a dignity about it, the divine touch of that love which has suffered much, and is about to forgive much.

"Laurinius," she murmured, holding out her hands as if she had gone blind again.

"Leedle one," said Pasetsk to his daughter, "this ees thy mothaire." He took Semilétka's shaking hands and drew them to his breast, "thy mothaire—who ees my wife."

# ANDERSON OF THE VOLUNTEERS

*By Charles Harvey Raymond*

"You don't belong to the regulars,  
You're only a volunte-e-ar;  
You don't belong to the rank and file,  
Tho' many a heart holds you de-e-ar."

THE words came to me in nasal, high-pitched tones, with a note of mingled protest and assertion. Somewhere near the rear of the moving column, above the creaking of axles and the cracking of whips, through the choking dust-cloud incident to the passage of two battalions of the line, a man was singing.

I waited for the four companies of volunteers to burst with him into song; but they, who most obviously shared his sentiments, maintained a wearied silence. Five hours of hiking across uncertain ground, in the full, blasting heat of a Philippine afternoon, had left them without desire for further exertion. As for the four companies of regulars who made up the balance of the column, I doubt whether, in the clank of arms and the scuffle of heavy ammunition boots, they were even able to distinguish the words.

Major Benton, U. S. A.—his gray head powdered thick with dust, his red, round face parboiled by the sun's rays—stepped from the head of the column, jumped a rice foss, and joined me on the soggy ridge of the paddie whence I had been making my observations. The column swung painfully past us, and the singer's voice rose more distinctly above the turmoil of it all.

"... within the coming ye-e-ar,  
Uncle Sam will take off his hat  
To you, Mister Volunte-e-ar!"

he ended triumphantly. He had apparently sung the chorus through several times since I first heard him.

"U-um huh," commented the Major, stroking a mustache that turned up at the ends like Satan's fork. "Well, I'll be ——!"

He broke off suddenly and pointed, for the singer himself had come



into view. At the head of the first volunteer company, marching with buoyant step, his head thrown back as he trolled, he passed within a few feet of us. "Don't belong to the regulars——" He made of it a sort of battle-cry, chanting the words like an affirmation of faith. His shoulders were broad and ample; his hips large and strong. As he swung along with no regard for the military proprieties, he carried his sword in his hand much as a country boy might carry a club; and I noticed that his ponderous feet "toed in." Somehow I had a vision of Western wheat-fields, golden in the sunlight, and of this man swinging a scythe with easy strength. Major Benton must have visualized much the same thing.

"Confound 'em!" he blurted. "They make good farmer boys back home, but they 're out of place in this, man's army. Since I 've been in command of this batch, I 've felt more like a nurse-maid than an officer. Why, blast my eyes if I don't have to tuck 'em into their blanket-rolls at night!" And the worthy Major gave vent to a series of well-rounded expletives calculated to convince me that his lot in life was not an easy one.

There came a sudden grinding of brakes; loud, teamsters' imprecations; a plunk of gun-butt in the thick dust; and as the dust-cloud cleared away we could see the two battalions resting on their arms along the road before us.

"I told McAndray to halt 'em here," said the Major, looking about him. "It 's as good a place to camp as any, and I guess that all hands have had enough hiking for one day. Now stand by and laugh while I get four companies of volunteers into their tents."

On the far side of the road a plain of solid ground, not too thick with cogon grass, terminated in the gentle slopes of a hill. There was room and to spare for the dog-tents of several regiments. Already the regulars had eased their shoulders of haversack and kit, and shaken the dust from their broad marching shoes. Officers hurried about, indicating to perspiring non-coms the limits of company streets; and foot-sore, weary privates ripped the canvas tops from the equipment train. As for the volunteers, it was even as Benton had said: they leaned awkwardly against their gun-barrels and waited to be told.

He who has not seen both volunteers and regulars go into camp knows little of the difference between amateur and professional in the game of war. Fifteen minutes after a line of regulars has struck arms, the dog-tents are down in the company streets; the surgeon has made an examination of the nearest water supply, and in nine cases out of ten ordered the water boiled; the commissariat has proportioned the evening ration, and kettles are boiling on the fires. Not so with the volunteers. Their dog-tents have probably become so enmeshed from the last night's packing as to be practically inaccessible; tent-pegs are missing

and cordage is tied in inextricable knots. Unless providence or the regular army interferes, a rush is made toward the nearest spring for water, and foraging parties hurry to the nearest barrio in search of chickens, eggs, and rice; for the company cooks are bewildered, and confusion reigns supreme in the commissariat. You have probably seen the same thing at a picnic back home. With this difference: back home, as a rule, dysentery does not lurk in the water supply, nor do cholera germs abide in the fresh country provisions.

All this and much more Major Benton explained to me that night, as we smoked on the ground before his shelter tent. The Major was hot and tired; his responsibilities hung heavily upon him; and perhaps he, in his gruff way, stated the case more vehemently than justice would have dictated. "They 're a joke, these volunteers who don't know the difference between a mess-kit and a first-aid package," he ended explosively. "I tell you they 're the biggest joke in the world. Everybody is laughing at 'em, and they don't know it. They 're——"

Some one was standing in the shadows at our back, and a slow, drawling voice interrupted: "I don't think that you ought to talk that way about the volunteers. It does n't seem right."

The owner of the voice came forward into the moonlight. We had little difficulty in recognizing the singer of that afternoon. He spoke quietly, and his round, placid face showed no signs of anger or resentment.

"I don't think that you ought to talk that way about the volunteers," he repeated. "It does n't seem right."

Major Benton turned slowly, one hand stroking his bristling red mustache. For an instant I thought that his anger would kindle; then his features relaxed, and he smiled sardonically.

"Go on back to bed, little boy," he said, "and I 'll be along to tuck you in. You 're a joke yourself, just like the rest of them—if you only had the sense to see it."

The volunteer whistled softly to himself, as if in deep thought.

"Maybe so, Major," he answered at length. "I 'm not saying that it is n't so. I guess that all of us are jokes at one time or another, regulars and volunteers, too."

As he walked away we heard sentry number one in the volunteer camp challenge him.

"You ought to bring your gun to 'present arms' and salute an officer when he goes past your line," we heard him say in response to the challenge.

And the sentry's reply: "Ah, go 'long, Bill. I ain't going to salute you. Why, I 've known you ever since we were kids. You ain't any better than I am. What have I got to salute you for?"

Major Benton stretched out his hands helplessly.

"There you have it," he said. And then he smiled grimly. "Joke, that 's what they are; the biggest joke in the world." And coming at last to see the proposition from its humorous side, he laughed long and loud.

He laughed the next morning, too, when reveillé brought us out of our blanket-rolls. The sun had barely risen above the copse of palm trees on the hill; a herd of carabao came slowly down the road to the patient prodding of some half a dozen natives; and in the camp the men were crawling Eskimo-like through the V-shaped doors of the dog-tents. An early morning silence, interrupted only by occasional grunts in the form of questions, and sleepy monosyllables by way of reply, made it apparent that the regulars had not as yet fully awakened to the responsibilities of the day. But in the volunteer camp, above the clinking of tin wash-basins and the splashing of water, a man's voice could be heard singing with noonday vigor:

" . . . within the coming ye-e-ar,  
Uncle Sam will take off his hat  
To you, Mister Volunte-e-ar! "

"Well, I 'll be ——!" ejaculated the Major, between guffaws of laughter. "And the sentry would n't salute him because they had known each other ever since they were kids. Well, I 'll be ——!"

And he thought so much of the joke that he told it, in the course of breakfast, to a dozen officers.

Thereupon a second lieutenant of volunteers—Anderson was his name, as we found out by inquiry—came into more prominence than his mere rank would have entitled him. Before night the soldiers in the regular camp had taken up the slogan: "Ah, go 'long, Bill, I ain't going to salute you. Why, I 've known you ever since we were kids." No one enjoyed the joke more thoroughly than did Major Benton.

Anderson endured the persiflage with stoical good-will. His broad, freckled smile was never-failing, his patience was infinite. "He has n't got the sensibility of a sheep," said the senior subaltern scornfully. "You can't get a rise out of him."

All of which might have been true. And yet at the end of a week I began to have my doubts. We had kept the same camp, for we were awaiting two ammunition wagons and a squadron of cavalry from Alzoas, fifty miles further south. The senior subaltern and I sat on improvised camp-stools at the end of the officers' row. "Even sheep have been known to revolt," I suggested; "and there is an end to human patience, as there is to all things."

The senior subaltern laughed complacently. "No danger of a revolt on the part of this sheep," he answered. "You watch him to-night. Alderdice"—Alderdice was the junior subaltern—"is going to get him

to come over to sing for us. You know he sings right well." And the senior subaltern laughed at the obvious joke.

Anderson obligingly came over after dinner and sang for us. Likewise, he brought real life and music out of a harmonica with a double keyboard. In the intervals of silence we could hear the endless whirring of crickets in the neighboring rice-paddies, and the dry crunching of carabao in the withered cogon grass on the hill above us. A thick, ragged blanket of clouds shut us out from all light of stars or moon; the air was heavy and close; it was one of those nights at the end of the dry season, when the parched earth cries aloud for rain, and black darkness descends. Silence was oppressive, so Major Benton, with an attempt at facetiousness, began.

"By the way, Anderson," he said, "what was it that the sentry on post number one said to you the other night? Something, I believe, about not being obliged to salute."

We all waited expectantly, glad of even such threadbare diversion. I could see Anderson's placid, unblinking face by the light of the camp-fire.

"I was just listening," he said slowly, and as if oblivious alike to question and questioner, "to those carabao up there on the hill. They're big and heavy like, but I suppose you might liken them to the cattle of our Western plains. Kind of reminded me of that, any way. I was thinking of how on a summer's night, with the moon as yellow as a pumpkin and twice as big, I used to hear the cattle come galloping and lowing across the flat, making the greatest racket. But somehow, we were always glad to hear them."

He stopped abruptly, and there followed a pause. Only an old and hardened sinner like Major Benton would have cared to go on.

"That's true enough," he said; "but tell us about the sentry. What was it, now, that he answered you?"

Anderson blew wheezingly through the keys of his harmonica, slipped it into his pocket, and stood up.

"You fellows have been trying to make a fool out of me," he said, without venom, "because I'm new at this business, and pretty much of a greenhorn. Major Benton assured me the other night that volunteers are a joke, and maybe they are. I am not denying it. But as far as I can see, there is n't anybody—not even a regular—above making a fool of himself as the occasion demands."

Before we could find a reply, he was gone. We watched him striding away—six feet tall and three feet broad—in the direction of his own camp.

"I wonder what he's going to do," said the senior subaltern suddenly.

And as the thought was put into words, it occurred to me that we all expected him to do something.

"You fellows sit around like a crowd on the bleachers during the ninth inning," complained Major Benton. "Waiting for something to happen?"

"No, of course not," answered the senior subaltern. "But it 's a spooky night; gives a person the creeps." He shrugged his shoulders and laughed, and conversation began again.

There is no accounting for the noises of the night; especially a night at the end of the hot season in the Philippines, when all the insect life of the torrid zone stays awake to protest and to fill the air with strange, unfamiliar sounds. I could hear the great lizard that is grandfather to all lizards, croaking with a throaty voice like the bass notes of a flute. I could separate the chirp of the small lizards, singing in legion, from the sharper whirr of the crickets. Where the four companies of regulars were encamped, some distance up the hill, a fire crackled and sent up a smithyful of bright, glancing sparks. I could hear the voices of the men, and the scuffle of feet as they moved about. Of the volunteers, I could hear nothing; their camp had been moved to the far side of the hill the day before.

Perhaps half an hour had gone by when there came to my ears one sound for which I could not account: it was a whimpering, rasping sound, very much the kind of sound a rope might make if dragged rapidly across sand. At times it increased in volume, and then it was more like the crackle of dry, burning grass.

The senior subaltern heard it, too, and paused in his conversation to listen. From where we sat, the crest of the hill was lost in darkness; it was from there that the sound came.

It shaped itself more clearly even as we listened. We were brought to our feet with a sudden start. It was as if, up there on the top of the hill, in the thicket of dwarf palm-trees, a regiment of men was breaking a way.

What followed was instantaneous and precluded all idea of action on our part. There came a thunder of feet that shook the very ground on which we stood, a concerted rush like the passing of a train.

In the next instant disorganized squads went yelling and cursing past me in the darkness; and I realized dumbly that four companies of as brave regular soldiers as ever wore uniform were scattering to the four winds. I am not able to this day to state what became of the officers with whom I had been pleasantly conversing five minutes before. They, doubtless, true to their profession, tried to rally the scattering companies.

It was all over in a moment. The commotion passed to the right, and died away like a cavalry charge in the distance. I listened in vain for a regurgitation; the silence of night had descended; the lizards and the crickets were chirping to one another across the humid flats of rice-



paddies. I experienced, I suppose, the sensations of the sole survivor of a railroad wreck. What great nocturnal force had swooped down to destroy us, I was unable to imagine. This much I know: no hostile army that ever charged through a camp could have created such a racket.

The senior subaltern came up, his puttees caked with mud, his face white with despair; the soldiers, shamefaced and silent, were straggling back into camp. What Major Benton said to them in his indignation, to what heights of irony and to what depths of invective he had recourse, concerns only himself and them. His anger is no wise abated when several hundred soldiers from the volunteer camp strolled over to look on and to smile. Perhaps Corporal Kelly, of many years' bibulous service, summed it all up when he said, "I've hearn the old man swear from Alcatraz to Governor's Island these twenty years, and I never suspicioned that he had in his vocabulary such words as them."

It was only after order had been restored that we came upon the second lieutenant of volunteers. He was sitting upon an upturned mess-chest, breathing a quiet melody through the keys of a battered harmonica with a double key-board. The expression on his placid, freckled face did not change at the sight of Major Benton.

"I forgot to tell you, Major," he said, "when I was talking about the cattle of the Western plains, that the reason they came galloping over the flats was that they smelt the smoke of a prairie fire, kindled somewheres behind them. And that was why those carabao, feeding peaceful enough up there on the hill, sort of put me in mind of 'em."

He got up, carefully brushing the dust from his service uniform.

"They can make a lot of noise, half a hundred of those carabao," he went on; "but they could n't hurt anybody. There 's a double row of palms up there as thick as fence-pickets, and a cliff as steep as a barn door, that kept them from getting into camp. And you would n't think, now, would you, that they 'd scare the life out of a battalion of regulars just by-passing on the road within fifty yards of them?"

There was an awkward pause.

"Which all goes to show," said the volunteer, "that a regular soldier—just like a volunteer—is n't above making a fool of himself as the occasion demands. And now, as we 're all Americans, fighting side by side in the same cause, suppose we call it square." And he held out his hand.

There was an instant's hesitation, and then Major Benton rose to the occasion.

"I guess you 're right, Anderson," he said, "and we 've learned our lesson." He smiled grimly. "But the next time we go into action," he added, "I 'll show you what four companies of regulars can do."

And now you know why, two weeks later, during the attack on Cal-

bidos, four companies of the -th regular infantry charged without support across five hundred acres of rice-paddies, in the face of a hostile fire. "A piece of reckless daring," said the Brigadier in command, "entirely uncalled for."

The officers of that same regiment will still tell you the story of the carabao, and point the moral. The regiment has a long and honorable war record; and they are no longer ashamed of the one time four of their companies were driven out of camp (as the K. O. genially remarks) by the powers of darkness.

One officer there is in the regiment, however, who is as silent as a Sphinx upon the subject. Doubtless, in this regard, he shows his good sense and magnanimity, for no officer is more deservedly popular. As for the rest, you need only know that he was given his commission for bravery at the battle of San Carlos, and that he was assigned to the regiment by request. His name is Anderson; he used to be second lieutenant of volunteers.

## A NEW FRIEND, AN OLD FRIEND

BY MADISON CAWEIN

A NEW friend, an old friend,  
A friend that understands,  
Who cheers the day and helps the way  
With heart as well as hands.

May Heaven send us each a friend,  
To rise with us or fall,  
When, wrong or right, we wage the fight  
With backs against the wall.

An old friend, a new friend,  
God send us both that day  
When Luck turns back and looks are black  
Along Life's weary way.

For, side by side, on roads untried  
Two souls may better speed  
Than one who goes the road he knows  
With none to help or heed.

## THE ESCAPE

*By Annie Steger Winston*

THE substantial form of Mrs. Mike disappeared through the door of the small dining-room, and the master of the house looked at his wife, facing him at the table.

"As the countryman said when he saw the giraffe," he remarked with impressive slowness, "there ain't no sich critter!"

Yet Mrs. Mike, reappearing with a plate of irreproachable griddle-cakes, was, to outward view, ordinary enough; a rather more than middle-aged woman, with flat bands of hair about a face carven with honest wrinkles, and a broad wedding ring upon one large, serviceable hand. Only, perhaps, the way she paused—palms comfortably planted upon her hips—and watched with benevolent patronage their enjoyment of the fruits of her skill, was not strictly the way of a first-class servant.

But first-class servants—"servants" of any sort, in fact—were not to be found in Steel City, except, of course, in "Millionaire Row." There was only help—so-called. Until now, the undeniable wistfulness with which young Mrs. White would look toward the magnificent region around the corner from their own modest street was not alone because of her husband's so far futile hope of finding scope there for his art, but because there was no "help" there—no naïve blonde casually requesting, in broken English, the loan of her employer's tooth-brush; no breezy, red-armed young compatriot whom one must address as "Miss," and admit to a share in the conversation, as she waits around the table.

"I hate the very name of 'help'!" she confessed once to her husband, in a moment of unwonted irritation.

"Blind Southern prejudice!" he assured her, with his unfailing cheerfulness. It was in Norfolk, Virginia, that they had married, the winter before, upon the strength of his prospects. Had he not studied mural painting, with conspicuous success, under the best masters at home and abroad. And what mattered a little poverty—together?

"Help," he went on, "is a beautiful word for a beautiful idea—service without servility, community of effort and interest upon the part of employer and employee——"

"It is," she agreed—"a beautiful idea!"

She was more than half ashamed of the cynicism of her own tone. But how could he know the effort required to have things tolerably com-

fortable? Dear as it was of him, if he only would not be so absurdly obstinate in not letting her do her own work!

That was before Mrs. Mike came.

He pushed his chair back from the table.

"There's simply no end to the poetry of American life, if you have eyes to see it. Take the careers of half the magnates around the corner there——"

"Or supposed to be," she said. "They seem to be true birds of paradise in keeping continually on the wing. Have you heard when Thomas M. Kennedy will be back?"

Nobody ever gave that great man less than the full name which was so mighty a power in the business world.

"No," he answered, and swept on:

"Take him, for example. It has n't been a dozen years, all told, since he was in the 'poor but honest' class; and now——! Take the titanic youth of this place, itself. Look at that street of palaces, risen in a night, as it were—'like an exhalation,' as old Milton says." He smiled a little ruefully. "Painting and all complete, I suppose, from the hands of the genii."

"Places like those," she said, with the practicality she was learning at Steel City, "never are complete, to people who don't know what to do with their money. And Thomas M. Kennedy's certainly is n't, stupendously splendid as it is. I saw in the paper yesterday that his object in going abroad was to buy old tapestry and pictures and cathedral glass and fifteenth-century Venetian furniture and staircases. But one thing he can't buy and bring home with him, and that is the painting of his walls to harmonize with it all. And so it is with the rest of them. If there was just any way in the world of getting in with those people enough to show what you can do!"

But how was that possible? One palace was divided from another palace by a great gulf of strangeness, and how much more from the little jig-saw cottages around the corner? The cottages might echo the boast current in Steel City that Elm Avenue was the most magnificent avenue in America, but how could the palaces be expected to do more than to forgive—and forget—the propinquity of the cottages?

Not that they were not nice cottages enough, in a modest way. Mrs. Mike, when she applied for the place of help, in answer to their advertisement, fairly gloated with approval as she scanned the premises.

"'T was just such a snug little place I went to housekeeping in when I was married," she said—"out in Ioway. You could n't swing a cat around in a room in the house, no more than this. And as for furniture—how much of it was made of packing-boxes, at first, you would n't believe!" Her frankly scrutinizing glance passed to Mrs. White—who could well stand scrutiny.

"Why don't you do your own work?" she said.

"My husband won't let me," the mistress of the house replied with meekness. There was small fear now that she would not be as propitiatory as the haughtiest help could demand, if there was any sign of competence. And competence, with Mrs. Mike, was stamped upon every lineament.

"Work never hurt anybody yet!" said Mrs. Mike stoutly. "But I know husbands!"

A profundity of problematical meaning was in her tone.

"You are slender built, but you don't look sickly," she resumed. "Still, I don't suppose you was brought up to work, and that may make a difference. But, lor' me! If I had a nice little cottage like this to fuss over——"

It was not until she had gone, with the understanding that she would return in the morning, with her box, that it occurred to Mrs. White that she herself had asked no questions whatever, except, rather tremulously, what wages would be expected.

"I guess I can be satisfied with what you have been paying," Mrs. Mike responded. And so it proved.

"She actually seems to like us!" Mrs. White joyously confided to her husband.

About a perfect treasure, it behooves one to step carefully. What if she still knew nothing whatever of Mrs. Mike, except through her own singularly fragmentary bursts of confidence?

"Save your soap-wrappers," she adjured Mrs. White. "You can get lots of tins and things for them. Once I got a chiny tea-set, with gold bands and moss roses. I've got a piece or two put away now at the house."

"At the house?" Mrs. White interrogated.

Mrs. Mike took up her broom.

"Where I was before I came here," she said, in a tone which invited no further question.

"I wonder where she could have come from?" Mrs. White mused afterwards.

"It does n't matter in the least," stoutly affirmed her husband, "so long as she is here!"

She came, she stayed, and was to all appearance satisfied. Nay, even unmistakably pleased and eager to please.

"It's been hard for her to get a place—or to keep it," Mrs. White shrewdly divined. "But whatever the objection to her is, I don't want to know it!"

Yet the inevitable happened. She could not help watching Mrs. Mike with more or less—not of suspicion ("I know she's good!" she would say), but of uncertainty.



"Does n't she strike you sometimes as a little curious?" she asked her husband.

"Tolerably curious about us, in a friendly way, if you mean that," he admitted. "She stands over me, broom in hand, when I'm at work, and catechises me about myself and my plans."

"She's made me tell her every secret of my soul!" Mrs. White exclaimed. "But I don't mean that. Is n't there something about her just a little—singular? I suppose, out here, it's nothing for her to speak of us as her 'young people,' and join in conversation at the table. I'm past caring for anything like that; but——"

"She is singular only in her perfections, so far as I can see," he maintained. "In fact, I think she is remarkably commonplace—if the commonplace can be remarkable. She is normal to the point of abnormality—a walking type——"

"But the way she gloats!"

"Gloats?" he questioned.

"And over the strangest things! Over the pots and pans of the kitchen—a dish towel, a gingham apron, a feather duster! But the really touching thing is the way she admires our living-room furniture. Of course, dear, you *know* I'm not complaining. Anything will do now, when we are just starting out. It won't make a particle of difference, after we get our old mahogany, that we had to put up first with cheap, shiny things, reeking with newness. Only, it is funny and pathetic to see her stand before them, lost in wistful admiration. 'They look so nice and new!' she was saying this morning. 'I can't abide old things. Out in Iowya——' and then she stopped and sighed. It's perfectly evident that she's seen better days."

No enlightenment as to her past came from Mrs. Mike. But her present, at any rate, was all that could be desired; unless perhaps——

"She does n't do the smallest thing in a perfunctory way," Mrs. White said to her husband.

He replied to a note in her voice:

"You don't want her to be perfunctory, do you?"

"No," she said; "but still——"

"Out with it!" he commanded.

"When it comes to kissing a broom——"

He looked at her stupidly, though he was not a stupid man.

"Kissing a——?"

"Broom. The handle of the one she sweeps with every day. I saw her do it, though she did n't know I did. Now, what do you think of that?"

"I think," he said dryly, "that it was an act wholly consonant with decency and morality."

Yet he too was plainly puzzled—to say the least of it.

"I can't help wondering if she's exactly safe," she said, another day.

He lowered his newspaper, which he was reading by the lighted lamp, and looked across the shiny centre table so admired by Mrs. Mike.

"Don't borrow trouble, little woman," he said, more sombrely than was his wont. "We'll have some, without borrowing, if things keep on this way. And I don't see what's going to change them."

She dropped her sewing into her lap.

"George," she said, "there's no use talking. I'm going to do my own work!"

"And right you are!" approved Mrs. Mike from the doorway, so unexpectedly that they started. "Right you are—if you are able. That's not for me to say. All I know is that when you take me and coop me up with nothing to do, it's next door to killing me. If I had n't taken my chance, and escaped when I did"—

("You see!" said Mrs. White's eyes.)

—"I don't know what would have become of me! But I've had a real good rest this month and a half, and now I'm ready to go back. Any way, I've got to—and 't was that I was coming to tell you. But you need n't think you've seen the last of me."

"We don't want to lose sight of you," Mrs. White hastened to assure her. "You've been so good, and such a comfort! And if there's ever anything we can do for you——"

A vague intention was forming in her mind of gladdening the simple heart of Mrs. Mike with the furniture she admired, when they should be able to discard it. Though, of course, in an—institution——

"Whatever I can do for you and him," responded Mrs. Mike heartily, "you can count on, sure. And I have n't got any idea in the world of letting you lose sight of me. I have n't got too many friends. Seemed like I'd die of loneliness, almost, after my husband left me!"

Poor Mrs. Mike!

"Your husband left you?" said Mrs. White gently. "Was it that that preyed on your mind?"

"I made him do it," replied Mrs. Mike, with disappointing coolness. "What preyed on my mind, if you choose to put it that way, was that house, with everything going on in it like clockwork, and me sitting there with my hands folded in my lap, and pins and needles in my very soul! Many's the day I've felt that nothing would save my reason but a broom and a dust-pan. I was like something hanging up with all its roots out of the ground, just fainting and famishing. Let them have waiting on that likes it. Give me a chance to get my blood up with good honest work, and I ask no better! But there's Mika," she said, and sighed.

Then she smiled a little.

"Think of anybody's trying to please me by building a palace fit

for a queen, and expecting me to live in it like a wax dummy, not lifting a finger! And I'll do it, too—for Mike. When he gets back, next week, he's got to find me there."

"Is he——?" said they together, recovering voice.

But Mrs. Mike was absorbed in her own reflections.

"I'll stay there, if it kills me—with a French maid to button my shoes for me! I won't say a word against it if he buys Egyptian mummies to put in it! A better man don't walk this earth than Thomas Michael Kennedy!"



## THE OAK THAT FELL THIS MORNING

BY JANE BELFIELD

THE little wood across the way  
Is hushed to mourn a death to-day:  
The ancient oak is down.

A quiver shook its mighty trunk,  
And trembling to the earth it sunk.  
With broken limbs, it now lies prone—  
A giant overthrown.

And as I gaze I hear one say,  
"Come, let us plant a tree to-day!"  
A hundred years ago!  
Where are the fingers that let fall  
The acorn? And the lips that call?  
Whose eyes behold from sunken mound  
An oak-tree on the ground?

What hope for you? What hope for me?  
An insect dies—and thus, a tree!  
To start is but to end.  
An hour, a day, or chance a year!  
Can this be all—one phase of Here?  
Through endless morrows' ebb and flow,  
The answer quickens, "No!"

# THE WEAKLING

*By Percy Shaw*

THE man stood alone outside the log cabin on the edge of Jackass Flats. The month was October, and the light was so gray that the top of Mount Valdez, to the south, looked like a ghostly nightcap.

The man blinked about. He was hemmed in by plains and hills of black-brown and white. The arctic night was preparing to settle down into its months of wakeless sleep. He read the signs, and clapped his hands against his breast to keep them warm. Then he started to go in; but something kept him back. Instead, he turned again, and his face had the look of a soul ready for some desperate thing.

The man's eyes were filled with loathing; his lips, visible through the slit in his coonskin cap, moved spasmodically.

"I can't go in," he said, and the sound of his voice startled a ptarmigan from a bank as white as itself.

Out of the chimney of the cabin smoke was pouring, evidence of activity within. The smoke blew down and caught the man on the doorstep with the force of an iron hand: he choked. The door opened, and a second man thrust his head out.

"Hey, you, come inside." His voice was cheery, he looked the picture of contentment. His red hair hung long over his ears. The first man stumbled in and stood against the door.

"Look here," he said, "I'm going back."

"Eh?" cried the other. "Back? Where to?"

"I'm going back to Valdez," said the first man fiercely. The other had begun drumming with a burnt wooden poker on the portable stove. His taps sounded like the notes of a funeral march. The man shivered as he waited.

"Got cold feet?" the red-headed man asked slowly.

"No, by God!" the other almost screamed, "but I can't stand this kind of thing. I've got to get away. If I don't, I'll kill some one before the winter's over." His face flamed as he spoke, and its tense expression was not lost on his companion.

"I'm not good enough for you, that's it, ain't it?" the red-haired man said finally, looking the dissatisfied one straight in the eye. "I've seen it coming for some time."

"It was a mistake," answered the other man more calmly. "It's not your fault, and it's not mine. It's this cursed silence. I can't stand it. I'm going back."

"All right," was the reply. "But the trail's gone, they's snow and ice and gale on t'other side of the glacier now, an', like as not, the last boat's left."

"I'm going back," repeated the other doggedly, as if all objections were answered by that one assertion. "I don't care how nor where."

"All right." The red-headed man laid down the poker and went straight to the point. "When you calculate to start?"

"Now," said the first man. "Give me enough bread and bacon to last me over, that's all I ask."

Buoyed by his sudden decision, he stood by while the other packed the necessary things. He might have been the master, and the red-haired man his valet, the latter worked with such care. "One blanket'll do you," the packer remarked, kneeling. "You'll want to go light." His eyes fell on his companion's thick leather boots. "Better wear gums," he said. "Them there'll cut."

The other shrugged his shoulders. "Never you mind my feet," he said. "They'll get me out of here fast enough." He strapped on his blanket with hands that trembled with haste, and with evident effort mumbled, "Good-by."

The man in possession faced him as he turned to leave. "Why did n't you tell me at first you could n't stand it? You knew I was n't nothing but a gold-hunter, did n't you? I never pretended to be your kind, did I? I never went to no college, like you did. I did n't want you, did I? Did n't I take you with me because *she* asked me to, after you got into that gambling mess?" He paused to regain control of a shaking voice. "Did n't I wait for you when you was sick? Say"—he thrust his face close to the other's—"when you go back, you tell her I'm pluggin' away."

The man nodded, and a look of disgust crept over his eyes. He turned and headed for Valdez. The other watched him go, watched him until he was almost lost to sight. "He ain't no good," he said slowly, "but I told her I'd look out for him; I sure did, and she's his sister."

He went inside, and soon emerged equipped in much the same manner as the black speck that was now bobbing up and down in the distance on the white and black wilderness. The man in possession cast a stoical look at the cabin, work of his own hands. He paused in the almost tangible stillness, and spoke to it as if it had been a human being. "I'll be back," he said, with a supreme faith in his strength, "after I follow him over. A word's a word, and he'll never make it alone." He shook his pack into position and started off.



Night came down over Valdez Glacier with the cold of the north and the silence of eternity. The great white way above looked on the great white way below. The rays of the stars seemed like scintillating ice-beams that would crack into splinters at the touch. The man who had left first plodded on. He had come from Valdez Inlet, over Valdez Glacier; therefore he thought he knew the path; but in the north a trail is the trail of a day, of an hour. The gale covers it, the sun melts it, the water washes it away.

On the stretch from Jackass Flats in the sheltered bend of the Tezlina, to the beginning of the eight-mile climb to the Peak of Valdez, there are tangled wooded ways; fields crisscrossed with fallen trunks, worn smooth by ice and weather. Over these the man stumbled; among these the man sank. His leather shoes cut his heel tendons. He could feel the blood flowing, but he looked straight ahead. Perhaps some one might be going over. If so, he would meet them at the glacier's foot. He thought of all things save one—that one was the red-haired gold-seeker, who even now had him in sight and was warily watching his progress with straining eyes.

Seven miles is not ordinarily a long way. It is short for a ride through the park; short for a walk through pleasant places. But in the north, where every step seems a weight, it is a long way—an elusive, an unending way. So thought the man nearing, one foot at a time, the looming white mass that cut the sky so evenly as almost to seem a part of it.

The man was lucky. Not one, but a dozen, were camping for the night at the foot of Valdez. Their guide, an Indian half-breed, was singing, loud with liquor, from his sleeping bag. The man, too weary to eat, sank down on a little clearing of shale by the side of a one-eyed letter-carrier.

"Going over?" asked the latter.

The man grunted.

"We're starting at four," the other volunteered. "Good-night."

The man was roused by the noise about him. He started to rise, and groaned. His tendons seemed frozen into disuse; every time he put his foot down he suffered. The half-breed gazed at the top of the glacier, like a mariner surveying the sea, strapping on his pack as he did so. "Oh ho!" he cried, and strode toward the mountain. The others followed; steadily, inexorably plodding up. It was Valdez Port by six that night, or perhaps never. The man gritted his teeth as he stumbled into line. When was flight from horrible silence, from unendurable companion, made so hard as this? He felt himself slipping behind, and the voice of self-preservation clamored loud within him.

For the line would not wait. Storm broke over the top of the

glacier; wind howled along the summit and swept icy particles like spears through the air. The man felt his strength slipping away, but the line went marching on. No one turned to see whether he was following. He shouted: the gale twisted his words into mumbled syllables, and cast them meaningless into space. In a fit of desperation, he threw off his pack, and, thus lightened, tottered ahead. Too often a step lost in the blizzard is a step regained at tremendous sacrifice. The effort sent strange things dancing before the man's eyes. The line vanished in the swirl. Like a wax figure under heat, the man wilted into a huddled heap in the snow.

Once more he raised his voice in a wild and despairing scream. Distorted by the mocking spirits of the wind, it reached in fragments the ears of the red-haired gold-seeker, toiling a quarter of a mile behind. If the man had turned his own gaze back, he would have seen nothing. He resigned himself. With eyes that saw not, he felt himself going; the rifts in the snow eddies through which the gray black plain below raised itself in miniature sank away into home scenes. The fatal drowsy warmth, so pleasant, that follows the teeth of the frost in the flesh, conjured up a panorama of town-folk and town doings. The man almost had his hand on the latch of the last earthly gate—it was just a step to the end of the last earthly mile, and he did not find it hard.

A girl, plainly his sister, was pushing him on. There was a ring of certainty in her voice. "He'll pull you through," she said. In fancy, he beheld himself facing her—explaining that he could n't stand the great white silence, and the other man, with the smiling face, the dull brain, and the homely words. He heard himself giving his message; he saw the faith in the girl's face as she listened: "He's plugging away."

His fingers were on the latch: strange lights were on the other side; strange voices were in the air; the snow that beat in his face, that hung from his eyelids, was perfumed dew, soft, soothing.

"Get up!" shouted a voice in the man's ears. Rough hands shook him; other hands slapped him.

"Here!" said the one-eyed mail-carrier, pulling a bottle of whiskey from an inner pocket. "Give him this." The red-haired prospector tilted back the man's head, and together they forced him to drink. Then they raised him, and, one on each side, urged him on.

"Fool!" shouted the mail-carrier. "Lucky I came back."

The snow covered the red beard of the prospector, but he made no reply to the unspoken question of the letter-carrier as to why *he* had happened so opportunely at the perishing man's side. Instead, he called:

"We can't catch 'em, can we?"

The mail-carrier tried to peer through the fog. "Wait till we reach the top," he said.

The half-frozen man was rushed on ruthlessly. Returning life hurt him; his surprised blood first protested, then leaped to its work. He suffered, then he began to realize the situation. "God, I was nearly over!" he muttered, and shuddered as he glanced at the figure of his former cabin-mate.

"Do the best you can," said the mail-carrier. "Lucky we found you."

They dragged him on till they reached the top of the glacier, then they paused. The god of wind and snow, erratic in his northern wildness, swept over the sky in his majesty, brushed off the clouds, and left clean air and friendly sun.

The mail-carrier pointed down: like a string of ants, zigzagging this way and that, the miners bound for Valdez were barely within eye-shot.

"I ought to know the way," said the mail-carrier. "I've been over it often enough. But it changes every day."

"We can't catch 'em, then?" asked the red-haired man.

The other shook his head. Without a word, the two caught the man between them and started on the twenty-two mile shift over ice rent with crevasses, over pools set in iridescent crystal. The man's eyes glanced mechanically about. Where was the trail of six months ago? He saw moraines and gurgling hollows. His bleared vision looked into canyons of shimmering death. His covered ears heard dimly, as of voices calling to rest, the cry of rushing waters thousands of feet below.

His feet bled, but they dragged him on. The mail-carrier gave him bread to eat out of the mail-sack, empty of mail; the other made a cup of his hands that he might drink; but when he begged to rest, they looked at each other and prodded him on.

The sun fell behind an ice hill, and night came.

"Wrap him in my blanket," said the red-haired man grimly. "He'll lie between us, and that'll keep him warm."

"Lucky I came back," said the mail-carrier; "but I got a family near Chicago, and I promised 'em I'd never leave any one in distress." He jerked his head toward the recumbent man. "Know him?" he asked.

The other nodded, and pulled the speaker aside.

"Lost the trail, ain't you?" he asked.

The mail-carrier looked full at him. "Yes," he said calmly. "I knew it three hours ago. I told you it changed every day."

Into the eyes of the red-haired man came a light of inexorable

purpose. "We've got to get him to Valdez," he said, and he seized the mail-carrier by the arm.

The other looked up. "My friend," he answered simply, "I ain't never made any money—that's why I'm here—but I've never lost my faith in God."

The prospector's hand dropped with its heavy glove. "So be it," he said, with a sweep of his arm. "This is all His."

In the shadow of a moraine, the three men slept. Death was all about them, and their own silence fitted into the great quiet of eternal rest that wrapped them round.

The man awoke aching in body, stunned in soul. They pushed on, crossing a great crack at its narrowest part, simply to face an impassable crevasse at its widest. All morning they pulled and urged the man along, and when he cried in the weariness of lost spirit, "I can't go any further," they still drove him on.

The mail-carrier found the trail. The man between did not know it. Only the light in the finder's one eye revealed it to the prospector. They floundered down, perspiring, starving, faint. A little cross stood ahead, propped up by stones. They reached it, and below the man beheld the flats that stretch six miles, like a carpet, to Valdez Harbor.

Down—down to the sight of smoke; to the smell of food!

The mail-carrier and the prospector took away their arms, and the man fell flat on his face at the door of a cooking shanty. The red-haired gold-seeker touched him contemptuously with his foot. "There's a steamer in the bay," he said. "He'll get out."

"How about you?" asked the mail-carrier.

"Me?" the other answered: he jerked his arm toward the ice mountain behind them.

"Me, too," said the mail-carrier.



## BESTOWAL

BY J. B. E.

THE heart's high hour hath belled its tone  
Not when Desire hath won her own,  
But noon doth smile through frowning rift  
When perfect love gives perfect gift.

# THE PASSION FOR PASSES

*By W. Dayton Wegefarth*

COINCIDENT with the establishment of places of amusement charging an admission fee, there seems to have been born in the human breast an ardent desire to enter therein without paying. "A pass! A pass! My kingdom for a pass!" has ever been the slogan of theatre-goers the world over.

The man who schemes to secure a pass, or who openly asks for it "on his nerve," would n't for a moment expect his butcher to make him a present of ten pounds of meat, or his tailor, a fancy waistcoat. "But that is altogether a different matter," he argues. "The butcher sells meat, and the tailor sells clothes—necessities of life; but a pass—why, that is merely a bit of scribbled paper, negotiable only for a couple of hours' entertainment!" He overlooks the fact that the seats sold at a box-office are the theatre's stock in trade, and that the pass he asks for is really a charity order equivalent to three or four dollars.

If the pass-hunter only realized it, he might be richer in the long run were he to buy his seats at the box-office; for in many instances he will squander twice their value in a dinner or some other effort to curry favor with his managerial acquaintance.

It would be a simple matter for the man who is empowered to write passes virtually to live on his pass-pad. He can convert it into his "meal ticket" or his check-book, if he so desires; for the liberality of the butcher, the baker, and the candle-stick-maker may be deeply sounded when theatre passes form the persuasive basis of argument.

It is customary in many theatres to extend the courtesy of a *matinée* to visiting players. During these performances the chronic pass-hunter can always be found. He flits from theatre to theatre, well stocked with neat cards setting forth an imaginary engagement with this or that travelling company. Many times "the man on the door" discovers the deception, but often the card is O-K'd, and the fraud slips blithely into a seat, chuckling over the success of his ruse. Afterwards he will probably "roast" the production, for it is a tradition in theatricals that the man who witnesses a play on a pass seldom has anything good to say of it.

Requests from newspaper men are numerous, but they are always welcome. Cognizant of the kindly feeling between the theatrical and



the journalistic fraternities, the pass-fiend often tries to take advantage of it. He will have cards printed, or even engraved, setting forth his connection with some local or remote publication which devotes space to theatricals. Presenting his card to the company manager, he announces brazenly that he has been sent to "write up" the production. Always on the alert to procure publicity, the manager generally admits the faker. Sometimes he is referred to the house manager, who is better acquainted with the local writers. As such a meeting would spell failure to the pass-hunter, he usually deems it best to lose himself in the crowd and disappear.

Policemen and plain-clothes men of the district in which a theatre is located are often admitted free, it being usually necessary for them merely to display their badges. If the pass-fiend cannot think of a better way to gain entrance, he will perhaps buy an ancient badge, or a new one marked "special officer." Attaching this to his vest, he "flashes" it importantly as he passes the ticket-taker, at the same time making some jocular remark about the lieutenant of the district, or the political situation. This, however, is too old a trick to be often effective.

It is an interesting fact that in Texas, where the edict against carrying concealed weapons is strictly enforced, the police officers who desire admittance do not depend on their badges. They carry revolvers in cases suspended from cartridge-belts, and as it is generally known that none but they are privileged to carry such weapons, they merely pull back their coats and display their shooting-irons. A man with a six-shooter could probably gain admittance to a Broadway playhouse, if he displayed his passport persuasively; but he might not be permitted to remain during the entire performance.

The telephone offers still another medium to the pass-hunter. He must first learn the names of the managers and treasurers of several theatres. Equipped with this information, the rest is easy.

Having decided on the production he desires to witness, he calls the theatre on the telephone.

"I should like to speak with Mr. Filbert, your treasurer," he begins.

"At the 'phone," comes the reply.

"How do you do, Mr. Filbert?" the suave fellow pursues. "I am speaking for Mr. Murray, the treasurer at the Grand. He would like to know whether you can spare two seats for to-night."

"Certainly," is the reply. "I'll leave them at the box-office."

"Thank you very much. I suppose he'll either send for them this afternoon, or his people will call for them before the performance. Any message for him?"

"Tell him I'll send my lady-love to the Wednesday matinée next week, and ask him to hold two seats. Perhaps I can come up myself before the finale. Good-by."

That evening the schemer falls into the line of prospective purchasers, and when he arrives at the box-office window he asks for the seats that are being held for Mr. Murray. They are given to him without a murmur. Until the two treasurers meet and compare notes, the pass-hunting Raffles is safe.

These are not the only tricks to which the theatre treasurer is subjected. Perhaps the pass-hunter will saunter up to the box-office and make himself agreeable for a while with some choice stories and a few expensive cigars. Then he will confide to the ticket-seller that he has an appointment in a few minutes, but that he would like to step inside to wait for his friend. Of course the treasurer is "on," but he may compassionately pass the man in, knowing full well that he could n't be dragged out with a flock of locomotives before the final fall of the curtain.

Then there is the woman who does not believe in paying for children. She struggles to the box-office with a boy in her arms big enough to move pianos, and asks for one ticket. The treasurer courteously explains that all children must be paid for; but the lady objects to buying two tickets, pleading that she has only brought her son so that he may escort her home after the performance. Another fond mother will promise the box-office man that if he will permit her and her child to enter the theatre on one ticket, the child will not look. The box-office is not without its humorous side.

The pass mania is evident everywhere. The manager's barber, his café waiter, the lad who polishes his shoes, the messenger who delivers his telegrams, the newsboy who sells him his evening paper, the old gentleman who was a friend of his father, and the parched antique who claims the distinction of having once seen the great Booth—all are eager to prostrate themselves before the man who is great enough to issue a pass. He is the one and only man who in their eyes is worthy of cultivating.

Pass-hunting with many men is pathologic. A man who expends his nervous energy formulating schemes to procure passes deserves as much sympathy as does the fashionable kleptomaniac who appropriates her hostess's bric-à-brac at an afternoon bridge party. One is not more responsible for the cupidity than the other.

It is not the two or three hours' free entertainment the pass offers that carries the thrill of joy to the pass-hunter's heart. It is because he is getting something for nothing—something to which he is not entitled. This it is that urges the persistent pass-hunter to lie awake nights trying to think up new plans that will effectually hoodwink the harassed manager.

## I HEARD A VOICE

*By Florence Earle Coates*

I HEARD a voice say: "You,  
Who worship, should pursue:  
The good you dream of—do.

"Arise!—Perfection seek.  
Surmounting what is weak,  
Toil on from peak to peak!"

"Henceforth, through sun and shade,"  
I answered, "unafraid,  
I follow the shy maid:

"Yea, beauty to create,  
Accept with heart elate  
Whate'er may be my fate."

Then, in youth's ardor, strong,  
I toiled my way along,  
Upon my lips a song;

But as I climbed on high,  
Toward the forbidding sky  
Perfection seemed to fly;

And though I strove the more,  
Still through some viewless door  
She ever passed before.

Heart-wearied and forespent,  
With body earthward bent,  
I ceased from the ascent;

Then, when hope seemed too late,  
Despairing,—at Death's gate  
I heard a voice say: "Wait!"

# THE SMILE'S SUGGESTION

*By Elizabeth Whitford*

I STOLE the Mona Lisa. What did I hope to gain by the theft? Not money, surely, for none would dare attempt to sell the picture as the original Da Vinci, while as a copy it would bring only a few francs.

Did I so love the masterpiece that I wished to hide it away in some secret place, and there worship it? Ah, no, no! The passion I felt for the picture was hate, wild, abhorrent hate.

I forget how many years ago it was (for my life slips along with such horrible uneventfulness, weeks and months have no meaning,) that a young girl set up her easel in the Louvre Gallery and began to lay in the colors for a copy of the Mona Lisa.

Leonardo claimed his portrait to be that of the most beautiful woman of Italy, and after four years' effort her smile still made him despair; yet the glances of the visitors to the Louvre that day gladly strayed to Marion. Where La Gioconda showed a smooth, placid, self-satisfied rotundity, the girl was all verve, all fire. Hers was a beauty of wandering dimple, of wayward curl, of bright, vivacious spirit.

And she had need of all her vivacity, all the enthusiasm which had brought her from America two years before; for her money was gone, and success came not. She could sell no pictures, could get no orders, and for six months she had been imperfectly nourished. More than one young artist had besought her to share his apartment, his food, and what he called his heart; but the banalities and immoralities of the *Quartier* were repulsive to her. Her instinctive purity shuddered away from the lightness of Paris—Paris, which seemed to her one leer, one smirk, a smirk of sinister suggestiveness.

But Eugene was different, she thought. He loved her honorably, he understood and respected her scruples. Still, even when she walked out with Eugene those unspeakable *cocottes* grinned maliciously.

Now she was painting the Mona Lisa, scrupulously, painstakingly; for if she could make a good copy she might sell it for a few francs, and perhaps get an order for more.

Marion was intently studying the smile that for centuries has been

called enigmatical when Eugene came, seeking her, and grasped her hand.

"We want you back at the studio, Marion. Every one misses you, but none so much as your *pauvre Eugène*."

"*Pauvre Eugène* will have to get used to it," joked the girl, carefully filling in background as she talked, "for I'm going to make such a good copy that I'll get orders for a dozen more."

"But it fills me with horror that you should be working here in this icy place at pot-boilers—you who have the talent, the force, the enthusiasm, of a master. Besides, beautiful one," he added, pressing her hand passionately, "I have sold a picture, so I have sufficient for us both for many months. Come with me, darling. A little nest for us two, I shall take, and there we shall know complete happiness, perfect bliss. Will you come, *ma mie*?"

"Dear Eugene, I like you. I like you more than any man I——"

"Then, you will come! Darling, the joy you give me!"

"No, no," trembled the girl; "you must n't hurry me. I must have time to think. I do not know that I love you enough, and I will not marry you until I am sure."

The man's eyes narrowed:

"Marry! But is that necessary? It is so much easier not, delicious one. While we love we can be very happy, *n'est-ce pas*? But if you should tire of your poor Eugene, you would be free to go, to follow your career. Marriage is *bourgeois*, and only the American girls are always speaking of it." Then, with more feeling: "But come to me, darling. You shall never regret it, and I want you so. I want—you—so!"

So Eugene was not different, after all! Marion was grieved and perplexed, but she was not startled. Such proposals seemed to be part of the art students' life. Of course, she had no intention of yielding, but she found the strong feeling of horrified revolt, with which she had first met an illicit suggestion, was somewhat blurred.

"Eugene, you hurt me so! How can you think I am that kind of girl?" she mourned, and, to hide her tears, turned resolutely to her work. Then, for the first time, she seemed to comprehend the Mona Lisa's smile. The smile! Why, the smile was the smile of Paris, that insinuated and insulted. It was saying to her:

"Oh, I know! You think you are dreadfully shocked, you think you are good and your virtue is secure, but I know. Bit by bit that virtue and that goodness will be filched away. I know how you will end. Fool, there is no virtue. I have had four centuries of men and women to judge, and I know the wickedness, the frailty, of humanity. Be assured, there is no such thing as virtue. I know how you will end in Paris. Yield—yield to Eugene, who loves you. He is, at least, an honest boy, decent, as Frenchmen go. You will yield some time; why not now?"



Marion's hands covered her burning face as she sprang up with a protesting "Go, go! I don't want you here. Go, go, I say!"

How ardently Marion wished herself back in Burlington! With what appreciation and affection she recalled the boys with whom she had romped at "black man" and baseball—the boys who never misunderstood, who treated her as an equal and a comrade.

Especially she recalled Herman, and the promise she had made him when she left, in response to his hearty "Well, chum, I'm sorry you can't see your way to staying here with me in the old village, but I suppose that *talent* of yours must be served; but, old pard"—with a sob that tried to masquerade as a laugh—"I'll be right here all the time, and if you should be in trouble, just cable me—*any kind* of trouble, remember. Do you promise me you will, Marion?"

And here was trouble surely. She was ill-fed, she was poorly clad, she was cold, she was hurt, belittled, and insulted; but how could she cable?

The next day and the days following Marion painted the Mona Lisa, painted carefully and industriously, unmindful of the tourists and their remarks. She was making a good copy, even though the smile continued to taunt her.

"Why struggle uselessly?" it insinuated over and over. "Women like you in a strange city are bound for one end. Seize what pleasure you may, seize it *now*. You must surely go down at last. Your so-called virtue will not protect you, for virtue is but a name. Take the goods your beauty may provide. Yield while there is grace in yielding."

When Marion took her copy to the art-dealer, he examined it minutely for faults. He had found some one who would furnish him cheaper copies, and was seeking an excuse for not purchasing what had been practically ordered.

"The picture it has the expression not quite correct, Mademoiselle—the smile, you comprehend."

"The smile," defended Marion, "is exactly reproduced."

Shrugging, the dealer objected:

"But I like it little. It is cruel, too cruel! I am sorry, Mademoiselle, but this picture with the so cruel smile, I could not sell."

In her cheerless attic, Marion braced the picture on the one chair, and studied its cruel smile while she sat on the bed, eating the rolls she had bought at the baker's, literally with her last *sou*.

Cruel? Yes, the most beautifully cruel thing in the world, she believed.

"I hope you like dry bread," the hateful, knowing smile was saying to her. "To-morrow, when you face a day without food, you will send for Eugene, or the next day at the latest. Little fool, have n't I seen scores like you in my four hundred years?"

Two days of hunger, with the picture's constant sarcastic suggestion—and Marion sent for Eugene.

Again I am standing before the Mona Lisa in the Louvre Gallery and looking upon its cruel smile.

I am old—if not in years, in the effects that years bring; but I still hate, even more intensely, that taunting smile, for now it is saying to me:

"Ah, was I not right? Did I not know? You see what you are now—a hag, a drab, a *scrub-woman*, where once, not so long ago, you were admired by the sight-seers who came to look at me but turned gladly to your living beauty. I told you how you would end! *I knew*. I could see you despised by your former lover, living for a time on his unwilling dole, then sinking lower, lower, until you became the wreck you are!"

It is true, it is true! I am all she says—a scrub-woman and a hag. My beauty gone, my talent a thing of the past, I that was once Marion Giles, now scrub the floors of the Louvre for a meagre sustenance.

Can a thing hypnotize? Can a pictured smile exert an evil suggestion, a malicious magnetism? Impossible, say you? But, alas, I know it is true!

The day I again encountered that smile, so infernally beautiful, I began to plan. I watched the guards, the custodians; I studied the methods and the precautions against theft. I found that the guard made a round through the gallery in which the Da Vinci hung a full half-hour before I finished my scrubbing. I timed him for days, and it was always the same. In that last half-hour I was alone in the gallery; and I saw I could easily pass the perfunctory examination we were subjected to on leaving.

Night after night in my squalid cellar room, I ground and sharpened a knife with patient skill, first on the stone floor and then on my shoe, until its edge was exquisite. Around my waist, under my skirts, I arranged a number of hooks.

When all was in readiness, I went to my work at the usual hour, with the knife and a plenitude of string concealed in my blouse.

Apparently absorbed in my scrubbing, I watched the guard pass on his last round, then, with eager haste, attacked the picture. To cut the canvas from the frame, divide it into pieces, pierce each with a hole, and suspend them all with strings from the hooks about my waist, took only a few minutes, and my voluminous, ragged skirts showed no more grotesque angles than before.

I passed out of the Louvre as stolidly as ever, but with what eagerness I hurried home! There I lit my charcoal brazier, and when it was radiantly glowing I placed the hated picture on the coals, rearranged

so that I could see the self-satisfied, depreciating smile. Gloatingly, on my knees, I watched it shrivel, writhe in apparent pain, and disappear into nothingness.

As the last feather of smoke curled upward, something snapped in my brain, a weight lifted—an obsession was gone.

I seemed to awaken and to remember.

"Why, the years are not so many! I am still Marion Giles. I am not naturally a wanton, I was never depraved. Beauty, talent, friends, were once mine! Why—why, I am only *thirty*. Let me get back to America, and I can yet redeem my life."

Before my little cracked piece of mirror, I took off my hideous rags, I combed and brushed my hair until the crude roughness left it and even a little wave, a fitful glint, began to show. Bathing myself scrupulously, I put on the one dress I still owned, shabby, yet decent, and was once more a self-respecting woman.

The long, long letter I have written home tells *everything*, but I am sure there is one there that will still say, "Come."

How I hate to don again my loathsome rags and go back to my work, as I must to elude suspicion; but how I rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, that that insidious picture can never again disturb the faith of girlhood, that guileful smile seduce the guileless!

## I WONDER IS THERE LAUGHTER?

BY ETHEL M. COLSON

WONDER up in heaven is there laughter

For her who loved it so?

If, parting past, the joy that followed after  
Made her less loth to go?

I wonder if, above the stars' strange singing,

The high angelic praise,

She hears those notes of vagrant laughter ringing

That gladdened earthly days?

I wonder if, this little life behind her,

Eternity before,

Some tender thought of love and mirth might find her

From one who laughs no more?

It matters not, my loneliness, my sorrow,

So she be glad and gay—

But if I thought she would not laugh to-morrow,

My heart would break to-day!

# SHORT-STORY MASTERPIECES

SECOND SERIES—RUSSIAN

## VII. FOUR DAYS

*By Wsewolod Michailovich Garshin*

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY JOHN CURNOS, AND WITH  
INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

### GARSHIN THE MELANCHOLIAC

✓ **T**HERE is still something around us and within that baffles and surprises us. Events happen which are as mysterious after our glib explanations as they were before. Changes for good or ill take place in the heart of man for which his intellect gives no reason."

These words of Dr. Henry Van Dyke, written among others to preface his latest collected short fictions, apply right well to our attempts at literary criticism. Mathematics differ from life in this—after a proposition in number or in form-theory is demonstrated the last word has been said; the height of finality is reached; for any one to argue the point might amaze, though it would not interest us. But with life, who can name a fixed and infallible answer to its problems? Here is ever the unknown quantity, irreducible to precise terms, and varying in all sorts of perplexing ratios.

Is it not exactly because literature is the literate expression of life that we approach its subtler problems with the same sense of futility as the issues of life arouse in us? Yet the eternal challenge to discover the *why*, born, as it is, with our own babyhood, dies not with our manhood's strength, but still calls us to try our "literary discernment" once more, and yet once more, to see if we may not by some magic of penetration find the true causes which move back among the shadows.

So, with some degree of assurance we lay our fingers upon the causes in a given literary career which seem to us to be calculable—parentage, birth, early environment, education, chosen occupation, and all the rest. Yet a considerable proportion of the results must remain unaccountable, because the actuating forces are, after all, imponderable. We find motives and standards of conduct, or ideals, clearly expressed in the man's own words; but did he understand himself? Here we find one acknowledged

fact, here a second, and here a third. But by what law of causation may we say that three-times-one is three and not six, or sixty, or even six myriads?

No, in seeking to estimate the weight of the inner things we are calculating the incalculable; it is like trying to clothe in cumbersome workaday garb a being that is too subtle for material restrictions.

Especially, then, in seeking to enter the penetralia of a man of Garshin's varying moods and tenses, let us confess anew to ourselves how tentative must be our guesses at truth. His mind—like that of not a few other literary artists—fluttered between normality and abnormality. However, only the literal, prosaic, practical, uninventive mind is sane, and that is but a shorter way of spelling uninteresting. There is still a strong argument to be made for the essential seer-quality—perhaps the "second sight," perhaps the inner light—of many a one whom the sober world has adjudged as of unsound mind. But this again brings us up facing another great and tantalizing *x* of life.

Wsewolod Michailovich Garshin was born in February, 1855, of good family. His south-of-Russia parentage marked his physique. He was good-looking, almost dark, fiery of eye, and in temperament sweet, impressionable, and sympathetic—a combination rare enough in a man to make it noteworthy.

Like Pushkin, he spent his very early life on the family estates, his father having retired from the army when the boy was three years old. At nine, however, the child was placed at school in the inevitable St. Petersburg, with the object of his preparing for the study of medicine. But the parental ambitions were not realized, for the lad was so abnormally nervous that he became subject to vagaries and hallucinations, so that while yet but seventeen years of age, and already writing remarkable bits of realistic self-revelation, it was found best to place him under restraint. The effects of this clouded period are to be traced in much of his later work.

Happily, in about a year he recovered his balance, took up study anew, and finished his preparatory course with credit, entering the Institute of Mining Engineers in 1874, at the age of nineteen—for in everything Garshin was precocious.

From this point on, Garshin's career may plainly be read in his writings. He wrote only about twenty-five stories in all, and practically without exception they are autobiographical. The two great dominant motifs grew out of his two great life-experiences: war—but war from a special view-point—and what I may call the border consciousness, experiences of the mind when its poise is either uncertain or completely upset.

I have said that Garshin viewed war in an unusual way. This is true



not alone of his fiction but of his life. In 1876 the Russo-Turkish war broke out, and Garshin considered it his sacred duty to go. The horrors of war had always deeply affected his sensitive nature. The intoxicating blare, the thrill of glory, the call of the spectacle, all meant nothing to him, except revulsion. But duty was a word of serious meaning, and it won from him a serious response. This pupil of Tolstoi could detest and denounce an institution to whose claims he felt bound to bow in time of national need.

It is always interesting to observe how two artists, especially contemporary artists, interpret the same theme. Guy de Maupassant, incomparably the greater literator, but destined to the same sad end as met Garshin, has worked out a motive in "A Coward" similar to the Russian author's "Coward," though the stories themselves could not be more dissimilar.

Maupassant simply unclothes a human soul face to face with the idea of suicide. Relentlessly he strips shred after shred of illusion from the introspective thinker who is meditating upon his own cowardice. But when the end does come the reader is half in doubt as to how to judge the wretch.

Garshin's impressionistic sketch is tremendously cumulative. In soliloquy the person of the story weighs the war, its appeals, its repulsions, the motives that lead men to go, the awful casualties, and finally tells how that he is considered a coward for his inaction.

Am I a coward or not?

To-day I was told that I am a coward. Certainly it was a very shallow-minded person who said so when I declared in her presence my unwillingness to go to the war, and expressed a fear that they will call me up to serve. Her opinion did not distress me, but raised the question, Am I really a coward? Perhaps all my aversion against what every one else considers a great matter only arises from fear of my skin! Is it really worth while to worry about any one unimportant life in view of a great matter? And am I capable of subjecting my life to danger generally for the sake of any matter?

At length—just as it was with Garshin, who joined a regiment at Kishinev of terrible memory—the "coward" goes to war, and after a story-within-a-story is told, his act of heroism closes the picture.

Ever since I was old enough to attempt just thinking, I have always had much sympathy for a coward—I suppose because I have been afraid so often myself at moments when heroes are said to feel no trepidation. And do we not all feel keenly with Garshin?—for a man of his temperament, and one finding nothing admirable in war, it must have required genuine courage to go, even while he was repelled and afraid. But this

was only one more phase of a contradictory character—as all characters are in whom the inner life and the outer do not coördinate.

In "The Signal," we have a perfectly-wrought short-story with as dramatic a surprise as ever capped a climax.

While serving in the army, as servant to an officer, the health of Simon Ivanoff had broken down, and all that was left to him was a minor post as linesman on the railway. One day, while walking the tracks, he met for the first time his neighboring linesman, whom he found to be quite repellent in his manner. The simple-minded Simon, however, eventually pressed an acquaintance upon both the linesman, Vassili Stepanich Spiridoff, and his young wife, and found that Vassili had been much embittered by reflecting upon the inequalities of life, and especially those of his own hard position.

One day, the Traffic Inspector came along and forced Vassili to tear up his little garden, merely because he had planted it without permission; and, besides, he reported him for his technical irregularity. Shortly after this, the District Chief arrived and showed animosity, evidently founded upon the report against Vassili, and when the man protested, the Chief struck him brutally.

The next day Simon met Vassili, stick and bundle over his shoulder, and his cheek bound up in a handkerchief.

"Where are you off to, Neighbor?" cried Simon.

Vassili came close, but was quite pale, white as chalk, and his eyes had a wild look.

Almost choking, he muttered, "To the town—to Moscow—to the Head Office."

"Head Office? Ah, you are going, I suppose, to complain. Give it up, Vassili Stepanich. Forget it."

"No, Mate, I will not forget. It is too late. See! He struck me in the face—drew blood. So long as I live, I will not forget."

Simon vainly attempted to dissuade him, and the man at length passed on.

On the day following, Simon left his wife at home to meet the six o'clock train, and, taking his knife, started off to the forest to get some reeds out of which to make flutes, which he used to sell for two kopecks apiece. As he walked along, he fancied that he heard the clang of iron striking iron. Since there were no repairs going on, he wondered, but as he came out on the fringe of the wood he saw a man squatting on the road-bed, busily engaged in loosening a rail.

A mist came before Simon's eyes; he wanted to cry out, but he could not. It was Vassili! . . . Simon scrambled up the bank as Vassili, with crowbar and wrench, slid headlong down the other side.

"Vassili Stepanich! For the love . . . Old friend! Come back! Give me the crowbar. We will put the rail back; no one will know. Come back! Save your soul from this sin!"

Vassili did not look back, but disappeared into the wood.

Simon stood before the rail which had been torn up. He threw down his bundle of sticks. A train was due; not a goods train, but a passenger train. And he had nothing with which to stop it, no flag. He could not replace the rail, and could not drive in the spikes with his bare hands. It was necessary to run to the hut for some tools. "God help me," he murmured.

He ran toward his hut, faltering every now and then in his eagerness, but he soon realized that he would be too late. What should he do! In desperation, he turned back to the spot where the rail threatened disaster to the on-coming train. As he reached it, he heard the even tremor of the rails.

Then an idea came into his head, literally like a ray of light. Pulling off his cap, he took out of it a cotton scarf, drew his knife out of the upper part of his boot, and crossed himself, muttering, "God bless me!"

He buried the knife into his left arm above the elbow; the blood spurted out, flowing in a hot stream. In this he soaked his scarf, smoothed it out, tied it to the stick, and hung out his red flag.

He stood waving his flag. The train was already in sight. The driver will not see him—will come close up, and a heavy train cannot be pulled up in a hundred sajenes.

And the blood kept on flowing. Simon kept pressing the sides of the wound together, wanting to close it, but the blood did not diminish. Evidently he had cut his arm very deeply. His head commenced to swim, black spots began to dance before his eyes, and then it became dark. There was a ringing in his ears. He could not see the train or hear the noise. Only one thought possessed him: "I shall not be able to keep standing up. I shall fall and drop the flag; the train will pass over me. . . . Help me, O Lord! . . ."

All became quite black before him, his mind became a blank, and he dropped the flag; but the blood-stained banner did not fall to the ground. A hand seized it and held it high to meet the approaching train. The engine-driver saw it, shut the regulator, and reversed steam. The train came to a standstill.

People jumped out of the carriages and collected in a crowd. Looking, they saw a man lying senseless on the footway, drenched in blood, and another man standing beside him with a blood-stained rag on a stick.

Vassili looked around at all; then, lowering his head, said, "Bind me; I have pulled up a rail!"

In "Four Days," which follows in an original translation for this series, we have another autobiographical story of singular penetration. It must be remembered that Garshin's convictions of duty led him to unusual length—he enlisted as a private, when his family connections would have warranted something better. So he writes from close to the people—in this respect differing from Tolstoi, with whose memorable Sevastopol sketches Garshin's "Four Days" has been seriously compared

by critics. It was at the engagement of Aislar that Garshin received his incapacitating bullet-wound, after real gallantry in action, and this is the battle of the story.

After recovering from his wound, our author became desperately absorbed in trying to save one of his friends from execution for having attempted the life of Loris Melikov, but Garshin failed, and soon afterward it again became necessary to confine him in an asylum.

From this seizure he recovered, and married a young lady who devoted her life to a beautiful service—that of healing his mind and preventing a recurrence of his malady; but, sadly enough, without success. He never shook off the boding pall of the mad-house. One needs only to read his "Red Flower" to feel the haunting presence of that pathetic colony of abnormal minds and spirits coming to sit with him in hours when he sought happiness in forgetfulness. Half-memories of days of half-self-possession are indeed shapes that haunt the dusk! To quote Waliszewski's vivid summary: "The story describes a demented person, half-conscious of his condition, who wears himself out in superhuman efforts to gain possession of a red-poppay—reddened, as he imagines, by the blood of all the martyrdoms of the human race. If the flower were only destroyed, he thinks, humanity would be saved."

In 1887, in physical and mental suffering too combinedly torturing to be borne, Garshin eluded the watchers by his bedside and flung himself down a stone staircase and sustained injuries from which he never recovered. The consciousness of his act caused him to brood still more painfully over his state, and he died in a hospital the next year, 1888, at the age of only thirty-three.

If one may venture to be analytical, there are three kinds of stories: those told of life as it exists apart from the narrator; those dealing with events intimately associated with the narrator; and those that are purely evoked from the inner life of the story-teller himself.

These last-named—spun of gossamer thread, intangible as the dawn, airy, floating, subtle—are the highest type. To this height Garshin did not perfectly attain. His stories were rather of the second sort, drawn from his own experiences. That they were touched with mysterious moods and vague, unnamable potencies must have been due to the author's pitiful journeys into that shadowy, distraught land which we so confidently call the Insane.

Garshin's realism grew out of his need for writing his own experiences. Though some of his descriptions of the dead Turk, in the following sketch, "Four Days," are so revoltingly real as to justify the excisions indicated in the text, Garshin's realism, as a rule, lacks disgusting detail. But it is as faithful to fact as a canvas by Verest-

chagin, whose paintings, indeed, might be said to exhibit the same method which Garshin applied to literature.

Garshin is a pessimist—of course, one is almost forced to add. His heroes are not idealized, even in the hour of their victory. But there is nobility—that priceless tone in literature!—in much of his work, and the body takes its true place in life, as an expression of spirit, and not as the master of the house.

All in all, Garshin was a great writer, doing pitifully wonderful things under such stress as makes us love him for his brave, losing fight against black foes within and without.

#### FOUR DAYS

I REMEMBER how we ran through the wood, how the bullets whizzed past us, how the twigs that were hit by them snapped and fell, how we scrambled through the bushes. The firing grew heavier. Looking through to the outer edge, I could see little flashes of red here and there. Sidorov, a young private of Company I—"How did he come to fall into our line?" was the thought that flashed through my head—suddenly sat down on the ground and silently looked at me with open, terrified eyes. A stream of blood trickled from his mouth. Yes, that too I remember well. I also remember how when almost on the edge of the wood I first saw . . . him in the thick bushes. He was an enormous, corpulent Turk, but I ran straight at him, although I am weak and small. Something burst, something huge seemed to fly past me; there was a ringing in my ears. "He has shot me," was my thought. But he, with a cry of terror, pressed his back against the dense foliage. He could have gone around it without difficulty, but in his fright he lost his presence of mind completely, and he tried to crawl through the prickly bushes.

With a blow, I knocked the gun out of his hand; I followed this by a thrust with my bayonet. There was an outcry: a roar that died into a moan. I ran on farther. Our soldiers cried, "Hurrah!" fell low, and discharged their guns. I remember that I too fired several times after we had left the wood and were in the field. Suddenly the cry of "Hurrah!" grew louder, and we all in a body moved forward. That is, not we, but my comrades; I remained behind. That seemed strange to me. Still stranger was the fact that suddenly everything vanished; all the cries and firing died away. I could hear nothing, but saw only something blue, which I concluded was the sky. Afterwards, that too passed out of my senses.

Never before have I found myself in such a strange situation. I am



lying, it seems, on my stomach, and I see before me only a small clod of earth. A few blades of grass, an ant climbing down one of these head downwards, bits of litter from last year's grass—that is my whole world. And I can see with only one eye, because the other is obstructed by some hard substance, perhaps a twig upon which my head rests. I feel terribly uncomfortable, and I wish to stir; it is incomprehensible to me why I cannot. So the time passes. I hear the noise of the grasshoppers and the humming of bees. Nothing more. At last I make an effort, and, extracting my right arm from under me, I press both my hands against the earth and try to rise to my knees.

Something sharp and rapid like lightning shoots across my entire body from the knees to my chest and head, and I collapse to the ground. Again darkness, again nothingness.

I am awake once more. Why do I see stars, which shine so brightly in the dark-blue Bulgarian sky? Am I in my tent? Why have I crawled out of it? I make a movement, and feel an agonizing pain in my legs.

Yes, I have been wounded in battle. Dangerously or not? I catch hold of my legs, there where the pain is. And both the right and the left legs are covered with clotted blood. When I touch them with my hands, the pain becomes even more intense. It is like a protracted toothache, gnawing at the very soul. There is a ringing in the ears, an oppressiveness in the head. I vaguely understand that I have been wounded in both legs. But it is all incomprehensible. Why have I not been picked up? Have the Turks really beaten us? I try to recall what has happened to me; at the beginning things seem a bit confused, but they gradually become clearer, and I come to the conclusion that we have not been beaten. And simply because I fell on the little field on top of the slope. In any case, how it all happened is difficult for me to remember; but I do recall how they all rushed forward, and that I alone could not run; and that only something blue remained before my eyes. Somewhat earlier our captain pointed towards this hillock. "Boys, we will get there!" he cried in his sonorous voice. And we got there; it is clear we have not been beaten. . . . Why, then, was I not picked up? This is such an open spot, and everything is visible. There must be others lying here. The shots came so thick. I must turn my head to look. It is easier to do this now, because when I first came to consciousness and I saw the grass, and the ant crawling head downwards, I tried to rise, and I fell back, not into my former position, but turned over on my spine. That explains why I see the stars.

I try to rise to a sitting position. This is very difficult, when both legs are wounded. After several attempts I begin to despair; at last, however, with tears in my eyes, forced out by the pain, I manage it.

Overhead I see a spot of dark-blue sky, in which is visible a large star and a number of small ones; and around me something dark and tall—the bushes. I am in the bushes—that is why I have not been found!

I feel a stirring at the roots of my hair.

How, then, did I get into the bushes, if I were shot in the open field? It is likely that I crawled here when I was wounded and the pain obliterated the memory of it. It is singular, however, that I should not be able to move now, and that I had been able to drag myself then towards these bushes. It is possible that I got my second wound while lying here, which may explain the matter.

I now see pale-rose stains around me. The large star has lost its brilliancy; some of the small ones have disappeared. It is because the moon has begun to rise. How good it must be at home! . . .

I hear strange sounds somewhere. . . . As if some one were moaning. Yes, it is a moan. Is it another unfortunate lying near me, forgotten like myself, with broken legs—or with a bullet in his stomach? No, the moans sound so near, and yet it seems there is no one here. . . . Oh, God, but it is—myself! Low, piteous moans; am I actually in such agony? I must be. Only, I don't understand this pain; because there is a fog in my head that weighs me down like lead. It is better that I should lie down again and go to sleep—and sleep and sleep. . . . Shall I ever wake again? It does not really matter.

At the instant that I am gathering strength to lie down, a broad, pale strip of moonlight strikes the spot where I am sitting, revealing something dark and large lying only a few feet away. Here and there upon it little gleams are visible in the moonlight. Is it buttons or bullets? Is it a corpse, or is it some one wounded?

Well, I will lie down. . . .

No, it is impossible. Our soldiers have not departed. They are here, they have beaten the Turks and have remained here. Why do I not hear voices and the crackle of bonfires? I must be too weak to hear. They are surely here.

"Help! Help!"

Wild, incoherent, and hoarse cries burst from my bosom, and they receive no answer. Loudly they scatter in the nocturnal air. Everything else is silent. Only the crickets chirrup on ceaselessly as before. The round moon looks compassionately down on me.

If *he* were only wounded, my cries surely would have roused him. It is a corpse. Is it one of us or a Turk? Oh, God! as if it really mattered. . . . And I feel sleep descending upon my inflamed eyes.

I am lying with closed eyes, though I have been awake for some time. I do not wish to open my eyes, because I feel through the shut eyelids

the blaze of the sun; if I open them, they will begin to smart. Perhaps I had better not even stir. . . . It was yesterday—yes, it must have been yesterday—that I was wounded; a day has now passed, and other days will pass, and I shall die. It does not matter. It is better not to stir. I will keep my body motionless. If I could only stop the working of the brain! Nothing will stop that. Thoughts, memories, crowd upon me. In any case, it will not be for long; the end must come soon. The newspapers will publish just a few lines to say that our losses have been insignificant: so many have been wounded; among those killed is Ivanov, a private in the volunteers' ranks. No, even my name will not be mentioned; they will simply say, "One killed." One soldier in the ranks—like some little dog.

The entire picture now comes to mind. It happened long ago; in fact, everything, all my life, *that* life, before I lay here with wounded legs, seems to have been such a long time ago. . . . I remember strolling along the street. Seeing a crowd of people, I stopped. The crowd stood and silently looked upon something white, bloody, piteously whining. It was a handsome little dog which had been run over by a tram-car. It was dying, as I am now. A house porter made his way through the crowd, picked the dog up by the collar, and carried it away. The crowd dispersed.

Will some one carry me away? No, you lie here and die. But how good it is to live! . . . Upon that particular day—when the little dog met misfortune—I was happy. I was walking along in a kind of intoxication; and there was good cause. Oh, my memories, don't torture me, leave me! My past was happiness; my present is agony. . . . If only my sufferings alone remained, and my memories ceased to torture me—for they compel comparisons. Ah, longings, longings! You are wounded worse.

It is becoming hot. The sun is scorching me. I open my eyes, see the same bushes, the same sky—only, in the light of day. And here, too, is my neighbor. Yes, it is the Turk—his body. What a huge fellow! I recognize him—it is the very same one.

Before my eyes lies a man I have killed. Why have I killed him?

He lies here dead, blood-stained. What fate brought him here? Who is he? Perhaps, like myself, he has an old mother. Long will she sit evenings at the door of her wretched hut, looking ever towards the north: is he coming home, he, her beloved son, her protector and provider? . . .

And I? Yes, I also. . . . I would even change places with him. How happy he is! He hears nothing; neither does he feel pain from wounds, nor terrible longing, nor thirst. . . . The bayonet entered his very heart. . . . There is a large black hole in his uniform, and blood all around it. *That is my work.*

I did not wish to do it. I did not wish to harm any one when I volunteered. The thought that I too should have to kill somehow escaped me. I only imagined how I would expose *my own* breast to bullets. And I did expose it.

Well, and what has it come to? Fool, fool! This unfortunate *fellah*, in Egyptian uniform, he is even less to blame than you are. Before he and others were packed, like herrings in a barrel, into a steamer and brought to Constantinople, he had not even heard of Russia or of Bulgaria. He was commanded to go, and he went. Had he refused to go, he would have been beaten with sticks, and perhaps some Pasha or other would have fired a bullet into him. It was a long, difficult march for him from Stamboul to Rustchuk. We attacked, he defended himself. Seeing, however, that we were a fearless people, and that, unafraid of his English carbine, we rushed forward and still moved forward, he was seized with terror. Just as he was trying to get away, some sort of little man, whom he could have killed with one blow of his dark fist, ran forward and plunged a bayonet into his heart.

Of what had he been guilty?

And of what am I guilty, even though I have killed him? Of what am I guilty? Why am I tortured by thirst? Thirst! Who knows the meaning of this word? Even during the days when we marched through Roumania, fifty versts at a stretch through unbearable heat, I did not feel what I feel now. If only some one came along this way!

Oh, God! But there must be water in that big flask of his! Only to reach it! Come what may, I will get it.

I begin to crawl. I drag my legs slowly; my exhausted arms barely stir the passive body from its place. The spot is hardly more than fifteen feet away, but it seems like ten versts. Nevertheless, I must crawl on. My throat is aflame with a terrible fire. To be sure, without water, I could die the more quickly. All the same, perhaps . . .

And so I crawl. My legs drag on the ground, and every movement calls forth most excruciating pain. I cry out again and again, with tears in my eyes, and still I crawl on. At last! The flask is in my hand. . . . There's water in it—and quite a deal! It seems more than half full. Ah, it will last me some time . . . until I die!

It is you, my victim, who will save me! I begin to undo the flask, propping myself up on one elbow; and suddenly, losing my balance, I fall downward across the breast of my deliverer. . . .

I have slaked my thirst. The water is warm, but not spoilt; and there is a great deal of it. I can live a few more days. I remember having read somewhere that one could exist without food for over a week, provided one had water. Yes, and I recall also the story of the

man who committed suicide by starvation, but who lived a long time because he drank water.

Well, and what's to be the end of it? And if I do live five or six days longer, what of that? Our troops have gone, the Bulgarians have dispersed. I am far from a road. Death—there is no way out of it. I have but prolonged my three-day agony with a seven-day one. Perhaps I had better end it all? At my neighbor's side lies his gun, an excellent English mechanism. I have only to stretch out my hand; then—one little moment, and an end. There is quite a lot of cartridges here, too. He had n't had time to dispose of them all.

Shall I end it all—or wait? Wait for what? Deliverance? Death? Or shall I wait until the Turks come here and tear the skin from my wounded legs? Far better that I should put an end to it myself.

No; there is no need to lose courage. I will struggle to the end, to my last resource. There is still hope of being found. It is possible my bones are not affected; and I may return to health. I shall again see my native land, my mother, and Masha. . . .

Oh, Lord, save them from knowing the whole truth! Let them think I was killed outright. What if they should learn that I had suffered slow torture for two, three, or four days!

I am lying now in complete exhaustion. The sun is scorching my face and hands. There is nothing to cover oneself with. If only night would come! I think this will be the second night.

My thoughts wander, and I am losing consciousness.

I must have slept a long time, because when I awoke it was already night. As before, the wounds ache, and my neighbor lies beside me—the same huge, motionless figure.

I cannot help thinking of him. Have I really left behind me all that is pleasant and dear to me, and marched here at the speed of four versts an hour, hungered, froze, suffered from the heat, only to undergo this final torture—for no other reason than that this unfortunate should cease to live? And have I really accomplished anything useful for my country except this murder?

This is murder—and I am a murderer.

When I first got the idea into my head to go and fight, Mother and Masha did not try to dissuade me, although they both wept much. Blinded by my idea, I did not understand those tears. Only now I understand what I have done to those so near to me.

Why recall all this? There is no returning the past.

And what a singular attitude my acquaintances assumed towards my action! "What a madman! He is meddling without knowing why!" How could they say that? How could they reconcile their



words with *their* ideas of heroism, love of mother country, and other such things? Surely I earned their admiration for living up to these virtues. Yet I am a "madman."

Presently I am on my way to Kishinev; I am supplied with a knapsack and all the other military accoutrements. I go with thousands of others; among them a few, like myself, are volunteers. The rest would have preferred to remain at home, if they were permitted. Nevertheless, they go along just like we "conscious ones," march thousands of versts, and fight as well as ourselves, or even better. They fulfil their obligations notwithstanding the fact that they would on the instant drop everything and go home if permission were given them.

A fresh early morning breeze has begun to blow. There is a stirring among the bushes; I can hear the flutter of a bird's wings. The stars are no longer visible. The dark blue sky has turned gray, and stretching across it are gentle, fleecy cloudlets; a gray mist is rising from the earth. It is the beginning of the third day of my . . . what can I call it? Life? Agony?

The third day. . . . How many more are left to me? At any rate, only a few. I have grown terribly weak, and I fear that I am unable to move away from the corpse. Only a little while longer, and I will stretch out by his side, and we shall not be unpleasant to each other.

I must have a drink. I will drink three times a day—in the morning, at noon, and in the evening.

The sun has risen. Its enormous disk, broken and intersected by the dark branches of the bushes, is red like blood. It looks as if it will be a hot day. My neighbor—what will become of you? Even now you are quite terrible.

It is unendurable to be so near him. I must get away, at all costs. Can I do it? I am still able to lift my hand, open the flask, and drink; but to move my passive, cumbersome body is quite another matter. Still, I will make an effort, even if it should take me an hour to move a few inches.

The entire morning passes in this attempt to shift. The pain is intense, but what does it matter? I no longer remember; I cannot imagine to myself the perception of a normal man. I have gotten used to the pain. I have managed to shift about fifteen feet, and am now in my old place.

Broken in body and spirit and half insane, I was beginning to lose consciousness. Suddenly . . . or is it only a delusion of a distressed imagination. Yes, I think I hear voices. The clatter of horses'

hoofs—and human voices. I almost came near shouting, but restrained myself. Suppose they should be Turks? They, of course—as if I already had n't suffered enough—will subject me to terrible torture, such as makes your hair stand on end just to read about in the newspapers. They'll peel my skin off, and they'll apply a fire to my wounded legs . . . or they might invent some new torture. Is it not better to end my life at their hands than die here? Who can tell—they may be my countrymen? Oh, accursed bushes! Why have you fenced yourselves so thickly around me? There is no opening except one aperture in the foliage, that opens like a window upon a hollow visible in the distance. There, I think, is a brook from which we drank before the battle. I can see, too, the huge flat stone across the stream, put there to serve as a bridge. They will surely cross it. The voices are dying away. I cannot make out the language they speak; my hearing too has grown weak. Oh, Lord! what if they are my countrymen! . . . I will shout. They will hear me even from the brook. That is better than falling into the hands of the Bashi-Bazouks. What has become of them? I don't see them. I am being consumed with impatience; I no longer even notice the smell of the corpse, although it has not grown any less.

Suddenly, a body of horsemen make their appearance crossing the bridge. Cossacks! Blue uniforms, red stripes, lances! About fifty of them! At the fore, upon a handsome horse, is an officer with a black beard. No sooner do the fifty horsemen cross the brook than he turns full face in his saddle and shouts:

"Tro-t, march!"

"Stop, stop, for God's sake! Help, help, brothers!" But the stamping of sturdy horses, the clanging of many sabres, and the lusty shouting of Cossack throats are too much for my weak outcry—and I am not heard.

Oh, curses! In complete exhaustion, I fall face to the ground and begin to weep. In my falling, I fail to notice that I have upset the flask and out of its mouth the water—my life, my deliverance, my respite from death—is oozing. I only notice it when there is no more than a half-cupful left; the rest has been absorbed by the dry, thirsty earth.

It is simply agony to recall the stupor which seized me after this terrible accident. I lay motionless, with half-closed eyes.

The sun is burning and scorching me as before. My hands and face have been smarting for some time. I drank up the remaining water. The thirst tortured me so intensely that in trying to take a single swallow I gulped down all. Fool that I was not to have called to the Cossacks when they were so near! Even if they had been Turks, it would have been better than this. They would have tortured me an hour or two;

but now there's no saying how long I am to lie here and suffer. My dear, dearest mother! If you only knew! You would tear your gray hair out, you would knock your head against the wall, you would curse the day of my birth, you would curse the world which invented war and its sorrows!

It is well that you and Masha will not hear of my sufferings. Farewell, Mother; farewell, my sweetheart, my love! But how sad and bitter I feel! And there is something gnawing at the heart . . .

Again I am thinking of that little white dog! The porter did not pity it, but knocked its head against the wall and threw it into a garbage heap. And still it was alive; and suffered a whole day. I am more unfortunate, because I have suffered already three days. To-morrow will be the fourth day, then the fifth, the sixth. . . . Death, where art thou? Come, come! Take me!

But Death does not come. And I am lying in the blaze of this terrible sun; and there is not a drop of water to refreshen my inflamed throat.

The day passes, and the night passes. No change. Again morning. No change. Another day will pass. . . .

The bushes are stirring and rustling, as if they were talking among themselves. "You will die, you will die, you will die!" they whisper. "You will not see, you will not see, you will not see!" answer the bushes on the other side.

"No, you will not see them here!" I hear a loud voice quite near.

I tremble and at once come to myself. I look up, to find the good blue eyes of our corporal Yakovlev looking at me.

"Spades!" he cries out. "There are two more of them here—and one of them is theirs!"

"There is no need for spades, no need to bury me; I'm alive!" I wish to cry out; but only a feeble groan issues from my parched lips.

"Lord! But he is alive! *Barin*\* Ivanov! Children, come this way! Our *Barin* is alive! And bring the doctor, quick!"

Presently I feel the pleasant contact in my mouth of water, whiskey, and of something else. Then everything disappears.

The stretcher sways with a measured motion. This motion is soothing. Now I recall myself, now everything lapses from my memory. The bandaged wounds no longer hurt. An inexpressible feeling of comfort has diffused itself through my entire body. . . .

"Hal-t! L-lo-wer! Fresh hands to the stretchers! Now get hold—lift—march!"

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\* A term of deference usually employed by peasants and servants in addressing their master, or in speaking of him.

The command is issued by Peter Ivanich, our sanitary officer, a tall, lean, and very kindly man. He is so tall that as I turn my eyes in his direction I can see his head, his peculiar long beard, and his shoulders, although the stretcher is being carried on the shoulders of four big men.

"Peter Ivanich!" I whisper.

"What is it, dear fellow?"

Peter Ivanich leans toward me.

"Peter Ivanich, what did the doctor tell you? Will I die soon?"

"What are you saying, Ivanov? Of course you will live. Your bones are whole. What a lucky fellow you are! Your bones are all right, and so are your arteries! But tell me, how did you manage to pull through these three and a half days? What did you eat?"

"Nothing."

"And had you anything to drink?"

"I took the Turk's flask. Peter Ivanich, I cannot speak now. Later . . ."

"Well, God be with you, dear fellow, and have your nap."

Again sleep, forgetfulness. . . .

When I awake again, I am in the division hospital, surrounded by nurses and doctors. At my feet stands a man whom I recognize as a celebrated St. Petersburg professor. His hands are blood-stained. He is attending to me, and presently he turns to speak to me:

"Well, the Lord has been good to you, young man. You will remain alive. We've deprived you of one leg; but that is a mere trifle. Can you talk?"

Yes, I can talk, and I am telling him all that I have written here.

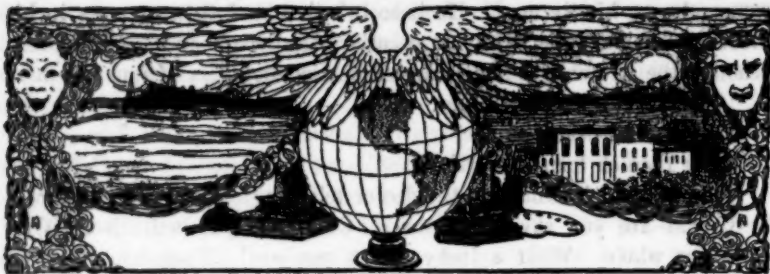


## THE OLD HOUSE

BY MAZIE V. CARUTHERS

**A**N empty shell of what was once a home—  
Like vacant eyes its broken windows stare—  
Frail play-house of the winds, that pry and roam  
Around its tottering timbers everywhere.

Deserted. But when night comes—misty, still—  
Back to their ancient homestead, cobweb-hung,  
They come who long ago, through good and ill,  
Lived 'neath its gables when this house was young!



## WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND  
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

### THE EPOCH-MAKING AUTO

CERTAIN great epochs stand out preëminent in the life of man. The first pair of long trousers marks one such. Never can memory lose the awful blend of pride and fear, the self-conscious affectation of indifference, the truly poignant emotions coincident with one's first walk down Main Street, in long trousers. The gibes of all the "fellers"—"Daddy Longlegs! Hey! Georgie Longlegs!"—still revert to memory, no matter how long the lapse of time. An epoch.

Another is one's first walk home with one's sweetheart, the first stammerings of love, the first kiss. Still a third, one's graduation from college—the brief poise on the fountain-spray of fame, becappped and begowned and with a sheepskin in hand, just before plunging into the cold, unfeeling, singularly unappreciative workaday world.

Marriage is a true epoch, with a thousand readjustments, realignments, and new points of view. An epoch, the coming of the first-born. When the father feels the little, warm, downy head of his Son lying against his heart, he knows the meaning of the word "epochal."

Now, what has all this to do with automobiles?

Just this: that the purchase of one's first machine, be it tiny run-about or colossal "60" touring-car, is just as much an epoch in a man's life as any of the above-tabulated crises of existence.

Every man who owns or ever has owned a car will bear me out in saying that the negotiations for a machine, its purchase, and the subsequent adoring worship thereof, which makes one stand out in a cold garage for hours, tinkering with its inwards and admiring its "lines"—



also making all and sundry share that admiration under pain of high displeasure—every car-owner, I say, will back me up in calling this an epoch!

The first time you run your own car down High Street, with everybody "rubbering," even unto the president of the Produce Exchange Bank, there thrills through you just the same sort of emotion that once was caused by the first long pants, the first sweetheart, the (first) wife, the first baby. Don't deny it! You know it's so; and I do, too, because all these experiences have been mine, every one!

That's why I call the auto an epoch-maker; and if you don't agree, that's merely because you've never had any true epochs, or epics either, in your life!

The purr of the motor strikes your car as sweetly as once did Her voice. The admiration of the populace is no less pungent than the one-time clapping of hands in Sanders Theatre when you declaimed "At midnight in his guarded tent . . ."

But there's another and a more serious side to this epochal business, too. There's a profoundly educational, cultural, and civilizing side. Every new bit of machinery in this old world of ours hastens the millennium "when thrones have perished and when kings are dust, and when the aristocracy of idleness has perished from the earth." The hum of a million or two million motors along our roads means better roads and more of them; a breaking-down of local and sectional prejudice; more uniform laws governing traffic; a vast and growing industry that takes its stand with all the others in the social evolution working toward collectivism; the dissemination of a perfectly incalculable amount of practical, common-sense mechanical skill and knowledge among millions upon millions of our people.

Has it ever occurred to you that the science and practice of mechanics, once "the mystery of a class," has now become the common property of practically all mankind? And that the motor, whether in car or boat, has been the main, driving factor in this vast efflorescence of knowledge?

Twenty years ago the average man knew little or nothing of mechanics. To-day there are literally millions of men who have—though not professionally—a sound, practical, working knowledge of the principles of an engine, its care, and its operation; millions who can run one, repair one, and handle one intelligently. The auto, in my opinion, has done more to spread a general knowledge of mechanics throughout the population, in a shorter time, than all the technical schools working full blast could possibly have done.

And look at the coming generation, will you! Look at the millions of boys now being nurtured on pistons, cams, differentials, and carburetors! All the vast army of auto-owners form also an army of instructors for the next batch of Americans. Boys love machinery, by nature,

as bees love clover-tops; and each auto has its little group of devotees. Every garage is a fascinating hang-out for boys. Proud and glad, indeed, are they, when some man says: "Hey, sonny, hold this here spark-plug while I prime the cylinder!" You can expand this *motif* yourself, indefinitely. Have I not struck a flowing well of truth?

It all verifies the philosophical concept that machinery is to-day, after all, the dominating force in modern life; that civilization is at basis a matter of superior mechanical skill; and that the materialistic interpretation of history is correct.

The auto is making a wiser, a happier, and a better world. *Vive l'auto!*

GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND

### WHEN NOT TO TIP

**T**IPPING, everybody says and reaffirms, is an evil that should be abolished—soon and for all time. The world vigorously and frequently condemns the tip, yet virtually everybody keeps on tipping. You and I, who have asserted time and again that tips are bribes, extortion, robbery, blackmail, and what-not, continue giving the waiter our fifty cents, the Pullman porter our quarter, the barber our dime, and the shoe-shine boy our extra nickel. While this failure to suit the action to the word shows either child-like inconsistency or timidity, it also indicates that tipping is not altogether and thoroughly an evil!

A friend of mine summed up the problem in a concise sentence. We went into a restaurant. As we passed through the doors, an alert individual fairly jerked our hats out of our hands and gave us brass checks in return. When we departed I forked over a dime for my hat. My friend failed to produce, and ignored the scowl. Going out, he turned to me with the remark, "I never tip for voluntary service."

I questioned him further, and he continued after this fashion:

"When I demand service, such as the attention of a waiter, I am appreciative of what I receive. If the waiter does his best with the order and makes me enjoy my meal, he has earned a little extra money, and I tip him cheerfully. When I ask for service, I tip judiciously if the service is satisfactory. If it is not satisfactory, I fail to come across.

"For voluntary service nobody should tip. When I am washing my hands in the wash-room of a station and somebody hands me a towel I am reaching for already, I don't think that I am obligated to shell out ten cents. If somebody persists in brushing me off without my suggesting it, he can expect nothing from me for his impertinence. When I enter a restaurant and a man grabs my hat as if I could not carry it to my chair, he gets nothing for his rudeness.

"If everybody followed this simple rule, people would not be sub-

jected to this 'voluntary' service, which is more often an annoyance. Tipping would be what it should be—a stimulant to excellent service."

LITTELL MCCLUNG

## CAPITALS

ONE of the New York *Sun's* many letter-writing contributors has made a suggestion which is certainly original, and meets with the approval of several thoughtful persons to whom we have mentioned it. This contributor contends that capital letters are superfluous, and should be consigned to the scrap-heap. Why use fifty-two characters when twenty-six would suffice? Consider the waste of time, effort, money, in constructing and operating typewriting machines in which the letters of the alphabet are uselessly duplicated.

There are grains of truth in this suggestion. Capitals were well enough in the Middle Ages, before the art of printing was discovered. They lent a certain embellishment to illuminated manuscripts, and the extra time spent in their construction kept the monks out of mischief. Nowadays no man in his senses would illuminate a manuscript. There is even a prejudice against the pretty feminine practice of securing the pages with pink ribbons. To type it, to punctuate it in places, and to enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope, is all that the most exacting editor requires. Illuminate your ideas, and let it go at that.

We agree that, in commerce and the newspaper press, capitals could be retired. For business purposes, the fewer flourishes the better. Signs point to the deletion of the superfluous "Mr." and the trailing "Yours truly." Abbreviate whenever possible. Spell as simply as you dare. An occasional comma will do. Only a few elegant triflers cling to the semicolon. Cut out the capitals, by all means. Cut out anything that may reduce the high cost of living. At first when you come to write "theodore roosevelt," you will be appalled by your own audacity. As for "i, theodore roosevelt"—yes, it does jolt the imagination. And the worst of it is that he will have to stop to dot it. A dotless "i" will doubtless be in order.

But the lower case in literature? That is another matter. Why, the very names of some distinguished authors would evaporate. Consider the deliquescence of a. lang, of g. b. s., of job. What readers would recognize the decapitalized philosophy of one geo. ade? Would our prosy age have poesy perish utterly? Set up Omar in lower case, and you could n't keep the moths away with Persian insect-powder. It would n't be fair to our magazine readers. How could they tell a poem if the lines did n't begin with capitals? By labelling it "A Poem," do you say? Bless your innocent heart, they do that already, and even now it does n't help matters one bit. Unless, of course, it acts as a warning.

W. T. LARNED

## ARE THEATRE PRICES TOO HIGH?

THE reduction of prices for seats by a leading New York theatre-manager has aroused many playgoers in the different cities, and it is now felt that no more serious problem confronts the men who still tempt fate in the production of plays than that of finding some way of attracting the public as of old—for it is no secret that the theatre in this second decade of the twentieth century has found a competitor so vigorous and compelling, that it is a question whether another year will not witness a complete readjustment of things.

This competitor, however, can yet be utilized by our play-producers as their salvation. Among the more important interests in theatredom, the theory is held that only by a substantial price-concession at the box-office can the theatres which now charge two dollars for seats invite the millions of new amusement-seekers created by the amazing vogue of the moving picture and the little theatres where popular vaudeville holds forth.

Every large city in this country has from one hundred to four hundred of these theatres, of various sizes and capacities. In these the scale of prices varies from five cents to twenty-five cents, and a man is able to provide entertainment for his entire family for what it costs to purchase one seat in the regular playhouses.

In New York City one man conducts a chain of twenty-four theatres, in not one of which is there a seat that costs more than twenty-five cents, while in the majority of them ten cents is the highest price. These theatres are all equal in size and beauty to the more expensive regular ones, but as they are open from eight to ten hours daily, the manager in question is able to present an entertainment of good quality, depending upon the multiplicity of nickels and dimes. And, mark you, this man in the short space of six years has become a multi-millionaire.

The same manager—Marcus Loew by name—six years ago was operating a penny arcade in New York's upper residence district. He saw that a new craze had come on the people, and that the moving picture was greatly reducing his receipts at the penny arcade; so he just shifted to the newer field, and his career has had no parallel in amusement history.

Twenty-five years ago there were twice as many producers of plays as there are to-day, and yet the day may not be so far off when the millions of new playgoers will want something more substantial than the pantomimic portrayals on the screen.

Will the inactive play-producers grasp this opportunity to come back to their own? Will they realize that bargains in theatre-tickets are as practical as bargains in more necessary requirements of life?

Who shall say?

ROBERT GRAU